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PETER BAAS IN THE DOCKYARD.

THE HISTORY

OF

PETER THE GREAT,

CZAR OF RUSSIA.

BY

SARAH H. BRADFORD.

AUTHOR OF THE "STORY OF COLUMBUS," "LEWIE," "THE SILVER LAKE STORIES," ETC., ETC.

"To a great man nothing is little."

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Dedication.

TO THE REV. THOMAS C. REED, D. D.,

To whose kind counsel and interest I am much indebted in the prosecution of my feeble attempts to make history interesting to the young, I dedicate this little work, which is specially designed for a class of youth in whom he is particularly interested.

As "Columbus" and Peter the Great" go out together to the children of the land, it will be very pleasant to me to see upon their pages the names of two good friends of my own and of each other; the one of whom in doing, and the other in doing and in suffering, are working good for themselves, and for all who come within the range of their influence.

S. H. B.

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PREFACE.

TO THOSE FOR WHOM THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN.

My dear Young Friends:—I suppose it is hardly necessary to tell you that I never had any *personal acquaintance* with Peter the Great, Czar of Russia. All I know of him I have gathered from books; and you will agree with me that it has not been an easy task to write the memoir of this great man, when I tell you that different authors have given entirely different accounts of him, according to the different points of view from which they beheld him.

There is a rugged coast upon an island far away, where a bold headland of rock juts out into the sea. Approach this rock from one side, and you see the profile of a man; from the other, and you behold the similitude of a bear. So with the subject of our story.

Some looking at but one side of his character, have seen only the great hero; others taking the opposite view, have beheld only a great bear or savage. I think before we get through with him we shall see a little of both.

If those who looked at only one side had gone round to the other, they would have seen the bear; and if these had taken their places, they would have looked upon the man, rough and rugged it may be, but strong and bold, pushing himself out from the barbarism of his times, breasting with unchanged front the troubled sea which lashed against him, and saying to its angry waves, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

From the different histories, memoirs, and letters of the time of Peter the Great, I have gathered those accounts which agree, and which seem to be well authenticated, and placed them together in a continued story, for such of my young friends as may not be acquainted with the history of one of the greatest monarchs that ever reigned.

It has not been possible to make this story as simple as that of "Columbus;" and I can only say that if any of my younger readers come across words of which they do not understand the meaning, they must go at once to that never impatient friend of young inquirers, the Dictionary, and then they will be learning in more ways than one.

There is many a hard name in the Russian, Swedish, and Polish languages. As in the "Columbus," whenever it was possible, I have left these

out, and many a brave man has sunk in this little work to the insignificance of "a Polish officer," "a Swedish gentleman," or "a Russian nobleman," just because of his unpronounceable name.

Now if you come to some names which make your jaws ache, and others which you cannot manage except by "*three sneezes and a ski;*" please do not blame me; I am sure if I had had the naming of the gentlemen, I should have done better by them.

One word more as to names of places and persons mentioned in this book. Since the time of Peter the Great, there has been an entire alteration in the spelling of many of these, so that if you read the names of places as they were then spelled, and look for them on a modern map, you will hardly recognize them. Thus I find the town of Kiau spelled in four different ways, till it has now become Kiev.

My principal authorities in writing this little work have been, Voltaire's Peter the Great, and Charles Twelfth, Barrow's Memoirs of Peter the Great, which book is little else than a compilation from other authors, and Middleton's History and Geography, an old and valuable book, for which I am indebted to the kindness of a clerical friend. This book was exceedingly interesting and useful to me, as it contained maps of the time, and views of the places as they appeared at the time of which I have written.

Wishing you, my dear young friends, more

pleasure in reading the book than I have had in preparing it for you; and hoping you will be as much interested in it as the story itself, however told, deserves, I say farewell for the present.

Your friend,

S. H. B.

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PETER THE GREAT.

CHAPTER I.

Russia before the time of Peter the Great—Its extent—The Czar Alexis—Rude state of the people—Splendor of the Court—Religion—Plans of Alexis—Curious custom attending the choice of a wife for the Czar—Story of the Czar's second marriage.

Before we begin the story of the wonderful man of whom this book will tell you, it is necessary that you should know something of the history of Russia, at the time he became Czar of that great empire. Look on the map, and trace the boundaries of the Russian Empire in Europe and Asia, and you will see a country of vast extent, bordering on Poland and the Frozen Sea, or, as it is now called, the White Sea, and joining Sweden on the one hand, and China on the other.

It is greater in extent than all the rest of Europe. It is by far the largest empire in the world. While

the people on its western shores are busy at noonday, about their daily work, those in the eastern part of the empire are sleeping, at midnight.

This country was for a time called Muscovy, from the name of its capital, Moscow, and its people were called Muscovites, but now it is again every where known by its ancient name of Russia. Of late you have heard much of this country of Russia, and your eyes have often turned to one little spot on the map called the Crimea, where bloody battles have been fought, and thousands of brave men have died upon the field.

In the time of Peter the Great, this Crimea was called Crim Tartary, and the Sea of Azof was the Palus Mæotis.

We shall not go farther back into the history of Russia than the time of the father of Peter the Great, the Czar Alexis, who was one of the best princes that had ever reigned over Russia Indeed, he did more for that country than the admirers of Peter the Great are willing to allow, and began many of the improvements which his son carried out and completed.

Peter was great enough, as you will see in reading his history, without taking from the merit due to his father, and heaping it all upon him. At the time Alexis became Czar of Russia, the people were little

else than barbarians. The private houses were only wooden huts, with scarcely any furniture, and the Boyards, or noblemen, slept upon boards or benches, with only the skins of animals under them. There were no pavements in the streets, nothing convenient or agreeable, very few workmen, and those very awkward and rude.

There were magnificent palaces, however, even then in the city of Moscow, and on public days, the Court appeared in great splendor. The Earl of Carlisle, who was then ambassador from England to the Czar Alexis, says that on such occasions he could see nothing but gold and precious stones on the robes of the Czar and his courtiers. These elegant dresses, however, were not made in Russia.

The established religion of Russia was that of the *Greek* Catholic Church, in distinction from the Latin. The *Patriarch*, or head of this Church, seemed to rank in power even above the Czar himself. Once or twice a year, on some great occasions, the Czar walked bareheaded before the Patriarch, leading his horse by the bridle, and the Patriarch insisted upon sitting by the side of the Czar in the Senate, and pretended that war or peace could not be made without his consent.

At length, in the time of Alexis, the Patriarch became so insolent, that the Czar, finding he had no

power himself to put him down, called together all the Bishops, and had a formal trial of the Patriarch, for receiving money from the Poles. He was convicted, turned out of office, and shut up for the rest of his life in a monastery, and another Patriarch chosen in his stead.

But though the Greek Catholic was the established religion, there were a great number of Mohammedan and pagan provinces. All Siberia was in a state of idolatry, and many provinces had no religion of any kind.

One thing which tended to keep the Russians in ignorance, was a law which prevented any Russian from leaving his country on pain of death. So there they remained, shut up within their own boundaries, knowing nothing of the world beyond, and like the Chinese, fancying themselves the most powerful people on earth.

Alexis seems to have formed the design of raising his country from the state of ignorance and barbarism in which it was sunk, and of making it more like the civilized countries of the globe, of which he had heard, from those who came to his country.

He began the establishment of manufactories, altered and improved the laws, tried to introduce regular discipline into the army, by bringing in foreign generals to train his soldiers; and formed plans for

the building of ships to sail on the Black Sea and the Caspian, for this country at that time did not own a single ship, and the people had never seen such an object.

But these plans of the Czar Alexis failed from the dislike of his people to foreigners, and improvements of every kind. They were contented with the old way of doing things, and did not like the idea of change.

Alexis also tried to introduce silk and cotton manufactures, by means of some Germans and Italians, but in this he did not succeed, through the obstinacy of the barbarous natives. This prince was twice married. His second wife, the mother of Peter the Great, was a beautiful young lady of the family of Nariskin. It was the custom for the Czar to marry only among his own subjects, and the ceremonies attending his choice of a wife were very curious.

A number of the most beautiful women of the kingdom were sent for to Court. They were received by a lady whose business it was to entertain them at her house, during their stay at the capital. The Czar paid them visits, sometimes in his real character, and sometimes in disguise. The wedding-day was fixed, but no one knew on whom the choice had fallen.

On the appointed day all assembled at the palace, when the Czar made known his choice. The bride

elect was presented with a rich wedding suit, and other dresses were given to the rest of the fair candidates, who then returned home.

In this manner the Czar Michael, grandfather to Peter the Great, married the daughter of a poor man, who was ploughing his grounds with his servants, when a messenger came from the Czar, bringing him presents, and telling him that his daughter was placed on the throne of Russia.

The second marriage of the Czar Alexis was after this fashion. The Boyard Matveof, minister of foreign affairs, was a particular friend of the Czar. The latter going one evening to his house, without attendants, as was frequently his custom, found the table covered, and said to Matveof in a familiar way, "Your supper looks so inviting, that it tempts me to partake of it, but it must be on condition that nothing be altered on my account."

He was scarcely seated when the wife of Matveof made her appearance, followed by her only son and a young lady. The Czar insisted on their sitting down, though contrary to the usual custom, and the young lady was placed opposite the royal guest.

He observed her with great attention, and then said: "I thought your son was your only child." "Your majesty," said the minister, "is right; this young lady is the daughter of Kyrilla Nariskin, a



THE CZAR CHOOSING A WIFE.

relation and friend, who lives on his own estate; my wife has undertaken her education, and, with the blessing of God, we hope to settle her honorably in the world."

The family having retired, the Czar observed to the minister that he ought to think of a suitable match for the young lady. The minister replied that, although endowed with good and amiable qualities, she was far from being rich, and that his own circumstances would not allow him to give her any considerable portion.

Some days after this, the Czar returned to the subject of the young lady, and told Matveof he had found a gentleman who probably might be agreeable to her; one not destitute of merit, and who, besides, needed no fortune with his wife; "One," he added, "who is already in love with your ward, and wishes to marry, and make her happy." Matveof, of course, was anxious to know who this suitor might be; and after some further discourse on the subject, the Czar said: "Well Matveof, you may tell the young lady it is *I* who am in love with her, and am determined to make her my wife."

The minister, thunderstruck at so unexpected a declaration, fell at the feet of the Czar, and entreated his majesty, for the love of God, not to think of it; adding, that he had many enemies at court, who

already beheld with envious eyes the particular marks of kindness with which his majesty deigned to honor him; that their jealousy would be increased if, to the mortification of all the noble families, his majesty should condescend to marry so humble a girl, who was under his care. The Czar told him he had nothing to fear; that his determination was taken, and would not be altered.

"Since, then, it is so," said Matveof, "I have one favor to beg, as well for the sake of Natalia, as for myself; which is, that you will not carry your wishes into execution without conforming to the usual custom of the country, and thus saving appearances; assemble at your court the daughters of the most distinguished families, among whom Natalia will be present, and let your majesty's choice be made in public." The Czar approved his minister's advice, and promised to follow it.

A few weeks after this, Alexis declared before his assembled ministers, and to the heads of the clergy, his intention of making a second marriage, and ordered them to call together the unmarried daughters of the principal nobility, in order that he might make his choice.

About sixty young ladies of high birth and great beauty were assembled, adorned, as may well be supposed, in great splendor of dress and decoration, but

Natalia Nariskin was the lady selected, and raised at once to the throne.

This event took place at Moscow, in September, 1670. *

* Staehlins' Original Anecdotes.

CHAPTER II.

Children of the Czar Alexis—Defects of Theodore and John—What became of the daughters—Ambitious plans of Sophia—Death of Theodore—Peter appointed successor—Revolt of the Strelitzes—Deeds of blood and horror—Sophia becomes Regent—Her plans as to Peter—Peter asserts his right to the throne—Plot to murder him—How overthrown—Punishment of Sophia—Death of John.

THE death of the Czar Alexis, in 1677, left the affairs of the empire in great confusion. He left two sons, Theodore and Iwan or John, and four daughters by his first wife. The oldest of these daughters, Sophia, is the only one of which I shall have much occasion to speak.

By his second wife, of whose marriage I have just told you, he left one son, Peter, the hero of our story, and one daughter, whose name was Natalia.

Theodore, the oldest son, became Czar of Russia at the age of fifteen. He was a weak and sickly prince, but of a mind far superior to his body. The second son, Iwan or John, was, as Voltaire says, still worse treated by nature than his brother Theodore,

being almost blind and dumb, very infirm, and frequently attacked with convulsions.

It was a rare thing for the daughters of the Czar to marry, but they were generally sent to pass their lives in a monastery. A retired life like this, however, had no claims for the Princess Sophia, who was ambitious and fond of power, and determined, if possible, to leave the convent, and place herself at the head of the Government.

She saw that both of her elder brothers were weak and sickly, and supposed that neither of them would live long, and that if they did they would be unable to govern the empire; and to the young half-brother, Peter, she gave no thought, for the children of second marriages were of little account in Russia, and no one dreamed that Peter would ever come to the throne.

In order to carry out her plan, she sent an earnest message to the ministers, telling them of her great anxiety about her brother Theodore, to whom she pretended to be strongly attached, and begging to be allowed to leave the convent, and take her place beside his sick bed, that she might nurse him as only a sister could.

The request was granted. She left the convent, and immediately set herself to work, by every art she could employ, to raise herself to the throne. She

showed the utmost tenderness and affection to her suffering brother, she treated all persons about the Court with great attention, and so conducted as to make herself a universal favorite.

To aid her in her ambitious views, she chose a man as artful and cunning as herself, for the head of her party. This was the Prince Galitzin; and these two persons actually governed the empire during the reign of Theodore, whose life of suffering was ended in 1682, in the twenty-second year of his age.

Knowing that his brother Iwan, or John, was utterly unfit to reign, Theodore was advised to appoint as his successor, his young brother Peter, who, though only ten years of age, had already showed himself to be possessed of a strong mind and manly character.

At this Sophia was greatly enraged, her hope having been that John would have been appointed successor to Theodore, in which case she knew that she could continue sovereign of the empire, as she now was in every thing but name. Sophia now set about raising an insurrection among the *Strelitzes*, or Guards, an undisciplined body of thirty thousand soldiers, who kept the Czars in subjection, and as Voltaire says, were more formidable to their masters than their neighbors.

She engaged in her services the General Couvanski, who was at the head of the Strelitzes, and in

order to enrage the people, she took care to have the story spread about that the Czar Theodore had come to his death by poison. The Strelitzes were called together, speeches were made to excite them to fury, and two days after Theodore was laid in his grave, the city of Moscow was a scene of riot and bloodshed.

The Strelitzes began, as an excuse for their insurrection, by accusing nine of their colonels of keeping back their pay, and insisted upon having these nine men delivered up to them. A sort of *Lynch Law* now ruled among this savage gang, and after holding a pretended court, they sentenced these officers to suffer the *Battogues* or knout.

This was a cruel and terrible punishment, the sufferer being thrown upon his breast, and fastened in that position, while his bare back was beaten with rods, till, when it seemed likely that the man could endure no more, he was released; and (which must have added greatly to his indignation) he was then obliged to rise, and with his back bleeding and sore from the beating he had received, humbly thank those who had been so kind as to inflict the punishment upon him.

And now, blood having begun to flow, the people seemed like thirsty tigers, seeking in all directions for objects upon which to exercise their cruelty. Physicians were seized and murdered, and if they declared that they had not been near the Czar Theo-

dore, the reply was, "Well, you are a physician, and if you did not poison our master Theodore, you have poisoned others, and therefore merit death."

At length they found a Dutch physician, who had been accused by the party of Sophia of poisoning the Czar. He was attempting to escape, disguised as a beggar, but being recognized, he was dragged before the palace.

The young princesses, Theodore's sisters, loved this good man, and gathering around him, they begged the Strelitzes to spare his life. "He is a good man," they said, "and a wise physician, and he took the best possible care of our brother Theodore."

But the guards replied that he deserved to die, as a physician, and also as a sorcerer, for they had found the skin of a serpent, and a great dried toad in his house; and thus he was put to death before the eyes of the young princesses.

And now the enraged mob began to search every where for the family of Nariskin, to whom the mother of Peter belonged, as this family were much hated by the Princess Sophia, who was determined on their destruction.

The whole family, including John and Peter, fled to the Trinity Convent, which was about fifteen leagues from Moscow, and was at the same time, a convent, a palace, and a fortress. To this place they

were followed by the bloodthirsty soldiers, some of whom dashed after them into the convent.

Peter and his mother took refuge near the altar, where two of the soldiers found them. One of these raised his sword to strike Peter down, when his companion stayed his hand, exclaiming, "Comrade! not before the altar!" and thus because of the man's religious prejudices, rather than because of any feelings of mercy or humanity, the life of Peter was saved.

But the work of death and destruction went on. All who were marked out as not in favor with Sophia were seized. Several officers of the Court were thrown from the balustrade or windows of the palace, and received on the pikes of the soldiers. For some time they searched in vain for John Nariskin, the uncle of Peter, upon whose death Sophia was determined,

At length, they found that he was really in the palace, and demanded that he should be brought out to them, or they would burn the palace to the ground. The sister of Nariskin, who was the mother of Peter, and the other princesses, terrified nearly to death by the violent conduct of the soldiers, went to John, in the place where he was concealed, and told him of the threats of the mob, upon hearing which he determined to deliver himself up to their power.

The Patriarch was sent for, who recived his con-

fession, and administered the last rites of his religion, as he would to a dying person, and then, placing in his hand an image of the Virgin, he led him forth to the cruel and savage mob.

The princesses in tears gathered round him, falling on their knees before the soldiers, and begging for the life of their relative; but the wretches dragged him from them, to the foot of the stairs, where they held a kind of mock trial, and condemned him to the death of the "ten thousand slices." This terribly cruel mode of torture is inflicted by first cutting off the hands and feet, and then gradually cutting the body into small pieces.

After thus brutally slaying Nariskin, before the eyes of the princesses, they placed his head, hands and feet, together with those of the Dutch physician who had attended the Czar, upon the iron points of the balustrade.

In the mean time the work of death was going on in other places, but the heart sickens in describing these scenes of blood and horror. Suffice it to say that all who were hated by Sophia were put to death, and in the end, the two princes, John and Peter, were declared sovereigns of Russia, and Sophia *Regent*, by which title she actually reigned over the empire.

Her first act was to reward the murderers who had put those she hated out of the way, by giving

them the estates of their victims, and publicly thanking them for their zeal and fidelity in her service.

The end of this wicked woman was now obtained; and seated between an idiot and a child, she enjoyed all the honors of a sovereign. Her bust was stamped on all the public coin, she held the first place at the council, and enjoyed power without control. She was a woman of great understanding, and some wit; made verses in the Russian language, and both spoke and wrote extremely well, added to which her appearance and manners were very agreeable.

After these troubles were quieted, the General Couvanski, whom Sophia had used as her instrument in raising the insurrection among the Strelitzes, not finding her as grateful as he could wish, formed a plot to destroy the whole royal family. It is said by some that he wished to marry Sophia, (who, he knew, would oppose this plan,) and determined to murder all her family but herself: by others it is said, that as she would not marry him, or reward him as he wished, he intended to murder her with the rest.

All agree, however, that the whole family fled once more to the Convent of the Trinity, where, after they were safely concealed, Sophia managed to decoy Couvanski within the walls, when he was immediately seized and beheaded, with all the officers who accompanied him.

Now the Strelitzes flew to arms and marched to attack the convent, threatening to destroy every thing that came in their way. The Imperial family, with the Boyards, and many gentlemen who flocked into the fortress, stood upon their defence. The Strelitzes now having lost their leader, and seeing so strong a force opposed to them, became frightened, and laid down their arms, and their fury changed into the most abject terror.

Three thousand seven hundred of this body of men, followed by their wives and children, with ropes tied round their necks, went in procession to the Convent of the Trinity, which they had just before threatened to burn to the ground.

Before the gate of the convent these frightened wretches presented themselves, walking two by two, one carrying a block and another an axe, and throwing themselves upon the ground waited for their sentence. To their surprise they were pardoned, and returned back to Moscow blessing their sovereigns. "And still disposed," as Voltaire remarks, "though unknown to themselves, to commit the same crime upon the very first opportunity."

The only other events of any importance that I find to have happened while Sophia ruled the empire as Regent, are an expedition against the Tartars of the Crimea, headed by Galitzin, which, in conse-

quence of the ill-regulated state of his army, utterly failed, and the plot against the life of the young Czar, of which I will presently tell you.

Peter was now seventeen years of age, and began to show the intention of taking upon himself the real sovereignty of the empire. This, of course, Sophia was determined to prevent, if possible. According to most historians of that time, her plans had all been laid with reference to keeping her young brother in ignorance, and making him as wicked as possible.

It is said that she kept him surrounded by a set of the lowest and most wicked young men in the kingdom, who led him into every excess, and that his time was spent in idleness, in drinking, and without instruction or good influences around him. Others deny this, and say that he was under the guardianship of his mother, while Sophia contented herself with the training of her brother John.

At the age of seventeen Peter married, in opposition to the wishes of Sophia. This enraged her beyond all bounds, and now, with the aid of Galitzin, she formed a plot to murder her brother, and engaged six hundred of the Strelitzes to seize on his person. Again Peter fled to the Convent of the Trinity, and so large and powerful a body of followers gathered round him, that the party of Sophia were completely subdued, and from this time her power over the empire was gone.

Dreadful punishments were inflicted upon those of her party who were seized. Some were condemned to suffer by the knout or battogues; others had their tongues cut out; some were banished, and Sophia herself was sent back to a monastary at Moscow, where she remained shut up till the time of her death, fifteen years afterwards. This must have been the worst punishment that could have been inflicted upon one so fond of admiration and power as the Princess Sophia.

The weak and sickly Prince John did not pretend to have any thing to do with the Government, but spent his short life in retirement, and died in 1696, some years before the death of his sister Sophia.

CHAPTER III.

The Title of Czar—Peter's Personal Appearance—Habits—Dread of Water—The Old Bark—Beginning of the Russian Navy—The Czar a Sailor—His efforts to raise a Disciplined Army—The Czar a Soldier—Le Fort—His Influence over the Czar.

PETER the First was now Czar of Russia. This title of *Czar*, as I should have mentioned before, was first assumed by one of the Emperors of Russia in the Sixteenth century, upon his conquering the kingdom of Casan, now in the Eastern part of Russia, the Princes of that kingdom having been distinguished by the title of *Czar*.

The Pope of Rome, it is said, strongly objected to this title being taken by the Emperor of Russia, as it sounded rather too much like *Cæsar*, the name of the Roman Emperors. But it seems the opinions of the Pope on that subject made little difference.

Peter is said to have been tall and finely formed, with a handsome face and piercing eyes. He was, when in a pleasant mood, lively, cheerful, and sociable,

but if any thing happened to excite his anger, he was extremely violent, and the expression of his face became disagreeable from its severity.

He had a strong frame and a constitution of iron, which fitted him for all manner of toil and hardship. Through the greater part of his life he was fond of eating and drinking to excess, but in his latter years he entirely conquered these bad habits, and became exceedingly plain and simple in his diet.

Even Voltaire, who in every thing seems to look on the bright side of the character of Peter, makes this acknowledgment: "The pleasures of the table, in which he indulged himself rather too freely with foreigners, who had been invited to Moscow by Prince Galitzin, seemed not to presage that he would one day become the reformer of his country; however, in spite of bad examples, and even the allurements of pleasure, he applied himself to the arts of war and government, which even then showed that he had the seeds of greatness in him."

His dread of water in the early part of his life was extreme, and its effects much like those of hydrophobia, throwing him into cold sweats, and sometimes into convulsions, when obliged to cross even a small stream or brook. The cause of this horror of water is said to have been this:

One day, when he was four or five years old, he was

lying asleep in his mother's lap in a carriage, and when they were crossing a bridge, the sound of a water-fall suddenly woke the child, and its rushing noise had such an effect upon him as to throw him almost into convulsions, and afterwards into a fever. It was probably owing to this cause that he was subject through life to twitchings and contortions of the face, and when much excited was thrown into convulsions.

It is quite remarkable that one who had such a dread of water, should have become one of the best seamen of his time. The strength of his character is shown in his determination to conquer this fear, and great as the effort must have been, he began by plunging into the water, till at length he overcame his fear, and became very fond of it.

There is a river which runs through the City of Moscow, upon which Peter saw at one time, a little, old, neglected bark, which had been built by a Dutchman by the name of Brandt; whom the Czar Alexis, the Father of Peter, had invited into Russia. Peter noticed that this bark was very different from the flat pontoons, the only kind of boats he had ever seen, and inquired of Timmerman, one of his teachers, "Why it was so unlike other vessels?"

The answer was, that it was built to go with sails and oars, and to sail against the wind. There was something new in this, and the curiosity of the young

Czar was always excited by any thing new or strange. He immediately sent for Brandt, the builder of the boat, and desired him to repair and rig this little vessel, and teach him to sail her on the Yausa; a river on the outskirts of Moscow. Peter was perfectly delighted at seeing the vessel sail, and soon learned to manage her himself.

He now had his little boat removed to a great lake near the Convent of the Trinity; and for a while delighted in sailing her there: but soon the limits of this lake were too small for him, and he longed to see a ship sail on the wide Ocean. Nothing would content him now, but to remove to the port of Archangel, where he had another small vessel, built by the same Brandt, and embarked upon the frozen sea, which no monarch but himself had ever seen.

This was the small beginning of the Russian Navy. Soon after this, Peter ordered Brandt to build two more frigates, and three yachts, which he piloted himself. His delight in sailing became a perfect passion, and he often exposed himself to great danger. When the storms raged, and the waves broke over his vessel, and his crew became frightened, he would say to them, "Never fear, the Czar Peter cannot be drowned. Did you ever hear of a Russian Czar having perished on the water?"

At Archangel, Peter became intimate with a Dutch

skipper of the name of Musch, and frequently went to sea in his vessel. One day he told Musch that he wished to begin at the lowest grade, and go through all the steps necessary to make a good seaman. Musch thought the Czar must be in jest; but he assured him that so far from that, he wished to go to sea with him the very next day, and begin and go through every duty of the sailor's life.

It must have been a strange sight to see the Czar of Russia, laboring first as *zwabber*, or common drudge —sweeping the cabin, and washing the decks. Then when ordered to the post of servant, lighting and keeping up the fire—attending to the skipper's pipe, and brushing his clothes; and then as cabin-boy, waiting on table, and mixing the grog.

Now having served in all these lower capacities, he was prepared to begin the duties of seamanship. He first began here as *Yong Matroos* or Young Sailor, and when ordered by the captain, went aloft, loosed, or reefed the sails, and did whatever he was ordered to do. Musch was now greatly frightened when he saw the young Czar running up the shrouds, lest he should fall and break his neck.

It must have been an amusing sight to see this poor Captain Musch, obliged by the Czar to order him to perform these duties of a common sailor, and

then standing in fear and trembling to see him execute those orders.

In all this Peter's object was to teach his officers, who were as ignorant as himself of all the arts of navigation, that it was necessary to begin at the lowest grade, in order to understand it well; and to prevent complaining, and murmuring, he set them the example, by taking the lowest rank himself.

The skipper Musch died shortly after this, and Peter sent his widow a present of a handsome sum of money for her support. Another anecdote told of the Czar, shows him in an amiable point of view; and on all such stories I am glad to seize and repeat them to you, as I shall have enough hard things to tell of Peter by-and-by.

One day when out at sea in a terrible storm, Peter became unusually anxious, and thinking that he could manage the vessel better than the pilot, he tried to take hold of the tiller, and teach him how to steer. The pilot was vexed at this, and exclaimed angrily: "Stand out of my way! I must know better than you, how to steer the vessel!"

He piloted the vessel safely through a dangerous pass among the rocks, and then remembering how he had spoken to the Czar, he was overwhelmed with confusion, and falling at his feet he humbly begged forgiveness for his madness.

"There is nothing to forgive," replied Peter; "I owe you my thanks, not alone for my rescue from danger, but also for the proper rebuke you gave me."

He then made the pilot a present, and settled on him a small pension.

Peter saw the necessity of placing a fleet upon the river Volga, to keep the Tartars and Turks in awe on the South, and another on Lake Ladoga, and the Gulf of Finland, to protect his territories from his powerful neighbors the Swedes. He, therefore, kept up this passion for sailing as much from necessity as choice.

At one time he invited a party of foreign ministers to accompany him in his yacht on a water party to Cronstadt to see his fleet, then ready for sea, when a sudden and violent thunder-storm arose, and the waves dashed furiously against the little vessel.

The ministers were terribly frightened, and begged Peter to put back, or at least to run into some port and allow them to land. Peter appeared perfectly calm, and stood directing the pilot and other officers how to work the vessel.

One of the ministers now approached him, saying, "I beg your majesty, for the love of God, to return to St. Petersburg, or to land *me* somewhere, and not to forget that *my* court did not send *me* to Russia to be drowned. If I should perish here, which in all

likelihood I shall, your majesty will have to answer to the king, my master."

Though really surrounded by dangers, the Czar could not help smiling, as he answered:

"Sir, if you are drowned, we shall also share the same fate, and then no one will be left to answer for your excellency."

After the same manner that he had adopted in forming a navy, did Peter endeavor to raise a well-disciplined body of troops, on whom he might depend on land. This, like his first efforts in sailing on the lake, near Trinity Convent, was looked upon only as an idle amusement of the Czar. It happened during the time that Sophia was regent, and had she suspected his real object, he might not have been allowed to go on so successfully as he did, with his plans for raising an army.

In these attempts he was aided by Mr. Francis Le Fort, who was the son of a merchant of Geneva, Switzerland. In his youth he had been a cadet, and had served in the army. He accompanied a German colonel to Russia, with a small body of troops which he had raised in the Netherlands and brought to Archangel, having been requested to do so by the Czar Alexis, the father of Peter.

When they arrived there, however, Alexis was dead; the Government of Russia was changed, and

every thing was in confusion. The Governor of Archangel allowed this whole troop to remain a long time in the utmost poverty and distress, and even threatened to send them into the extremity of Siberia, upon which every man was obliged to take care of himself.

Le Fort, in great poverty and want, found his way to Moscow, where he called upon the Danish resident, named De Horn, who made him his secretary. In company with De Horn, Peter saw and was much delighted with Le Fort, whom he immediately took into his own service, giving him the command of a company of foot.

The Czar had formed the design of breaking up and scattering that undisciplined gang of men the Strelitzes, by means of a powerful and well-drilled army which he hoped to raise, and this secret he confided to Le Fort.

Peter had a country-seat, which was called Preobbaazinski, and here he began by forming a company of fifty of his youngest servants; and some young gentlemen, the sons of Boyards, or noblemen, were chosen for their officers. But in order that these officers should be properly trained, Peter set them an example which he made them follow, of beginning at the very lowest rank, and going through the different grades, as he had done in the navy.

Behold Peter, the Czar of Russia, then, acting as

drummer to the regiment, and then as private soldier, and afterwards as corporal, sergeant, and ensign. When did the world ever before, or since, behold a monarch, who thus laid aside his greatness, and demeaned himself so far as rank was concerned, for the good of his country.

Thus in a short time the Czar found himself supported by a body of five thousand disciplined troops, in whom he knew he could trust. These were trained by General Patrick Gordon, an able officer from Scotland. Le Fort undertook to raise another body of twelve thousand men, which he accomplished, and was rewarded by being appointed their General.

In order to keep these troops occupied, and in proper training in time of peace, Peter caused them to be exercised in sham fights, and other warlike exercises. A fort was erected, which one party was to besiege and the other to defend. But the men became so much engaged in these encounters that they forgot it was only a play, and fought with so much zeal that several were wounded on both sides, and Le Fort himself received a severe wound.

All this time the Czar had by no means forgotten his navy, but was employing foreigners in building vessels with which he intended to attack Azof, then in possession of the Tartars of the Crimea. Means were taken too, to raise money to defray all these in-

creased expenses of the army and navy; and by following the advice of Le Fort, this was accomplished.

The influence of this man, Le Fort, over the Czar was most wonderful. He could do with him what no other man could. Often when some of the Boyards or noblemen were condemned to suffer by the knout, or to lose their heads, as often was done for very slight offences, Le Fort would present himself before the Czar, and beg that he would wait, and think the matter over in a cooler moment. If this did not succeed, he would beg him to strike the blow upon himself, rather than let the innocent person suffer.

In this way many a life was spared, and many a poor man was saved severe and undeserved punishment. Of course Le Fort became a great favorite with the Russians, who seemed to forget that he was a foreigner, and looked upon him as one of their own countrymen.

CHAPTER IV.

The Pastry cook's boy—The poisoning plot discovered—Peter's separation from his wife—The siege of Azof—The traitor Jacob—The triumphal procession—A conspiracy—How defeated—A strange plan of the Czar—The Czar in Holland—The curiosity he excited—His dread of a crowd—His rage at the authorities of Zaandam.

THERE was a poor family living on the banks of the Volga, of the name of Menzikoff. A young boy belonged to this family, who seemed to be of a most enterprising disposition; and not being able to enjoy even the advantages of a common school education at home, he determined to set out for Moscow, and try and make his own way in the world.

He found occupation at first in the shop of a pastry cook, and daily walked the streets of Moscow with a basket of cakes and pies upon his arm, singing in a clear sweet voice, and to a tune of his own composing, as he offered his cakes and pies for sale.

He was a handsome boy, and of pleasant manners, and was usually surrounded by a crowd, who soon emptied his basket. He was one day noticed by

General Le Fort, who called him into his house, and asked him if he would sell his pies and his basket.

"It is my business to sell pies, sir," answered the boy pleasantly, "but the basket is my master's, and I cannot sell it without his leave." The General was so delighted with the appearance and manner of the boy, that he took him into his service, and soon called the attention of the Czar to him. Peter was equally delighted with the boy, and begged that he might enter his service as page.

He soon became a very great favorite with his master, who took him on all his journeys, and employed him often on his secret business. There is a story told, that to this boy (at the time he was in the service of the pastry cook) the Czar owed his life.

Peter, it is said, dined one day with one of the discontented Boyards, who had determined to poison him. Young Menzikoff, happening to be in the kitchen, saw a white powder put into a particular dish. He took care to let the Czar know what he had seen. At the table, when Peter was urged to partake of this dish, he refused, but asked the nobleman who had invited him, to try it himself.

He declined, saying that it was not proper for the servant to eat with his master. The dish was then set on the floor, and a dog who was near was called to eat of it, which he did, and immediately died in con-

vulsions. The Boyard was seized, but was soon found dead in his bed, having probably put an end to himself.

This pastry cook's boy was afterwards Prince Alexander Menzikoff, and rose to riches, honor and power.

Peter was not happy in his first marriage, into which he had been forced at the age of seventeen, by the principal men of his party. His wife and all her family had a great horror of foreigners, and opposed all the improvements Peter wished to make, thus encouraging the party who were in opposition to the Czar.

Before he was twenty years old, he had sent her from him, and ordered her to be strictly confined in a convent. She was allowed, however, to retain the guardianship of her little boy, Alexis; and it is supposed that the misfortunes of his after life were owing to the training he received, and the sentiments he imbibed from his mother.

General Le Fort was given the rank of Admiral by sea, as well as General of the land forces, and was sent to hasten the building of the vessels which were to sail down the river Don, to attack Azof, of which place the Czar was determined to get possession if possible, and by that means to drive the Tartars from the Crimea.

The place was attacked by General Gordon, with five thousand men, Le Fort with twelve thousand, and other companies formed from the Strelitzes and Cossacks. The expected vessels which were to attack Azof by sea did not reach the place in time, but the Russians were too impatient to wait. They besieged the place, but were driven back and defeated, owing, it is said, to the desertion and treachery of one of the Czar's lower officers.

This man, whose name was Jacob, having been punished by his General for some fault, determined on revenge. He therefore in the night spiked the guns of the Russians, and then deserted to the enemy, and was active in defending the fortress he had come to attack.

The Czar, though beaten, was not discouraged, and the next spring he brought a large force by sea and land against Azof, and succeeded in taking the city. Peter was well pleased to find the traitor Jacob in the city. It would seem that those to whom he deserted were not very grateful for his services, for the Governor made no objection to delivering him up to the Czar, with the rest of the prisoners.

The Turks and Tartars being now subdued, Peter thought it best to allow his people the pleasure of a triumphal show. As for himself, he seems to have had no fondness for such things, but kept in the back-

ground, and took rank only as an inferior officer in the procession.

The army entered Moscow, under triumphal arches, in the midst of superb fireworks, and the firing of cannon, and ringing of bells; and feasting, fireworks and illuminations were kept up for several days throughout the city.

In the rear of the grand procession, came the captives at Azof, and last of all, in a cart, the traitor Jacob, with an executioner on each side, and a gallows over his head. He was first broken on the wheel, and then hung, with a label on his breast, saying, "This wretch has five times changed his religion, and is a traitor to God and man."

The changes which the Czar was constantly introducing into the kingdom, and the favor shown to foreigners, so enraged the party already opposed to him, particularly the officers of the Strelitzes, that a number of them now entered into a conspiracy to put the Czar to death.

The plan was to set fire to a building in the Kremlin (a palace in Moscow) at night, and when, as was certain to be the case, the Czar appeared upon the spot, two of these men were to seize and stab him. The plan was all ready for execution when the courage of two of the conspirators gave out, and they went to the Czar and made known the whole plot.

With a few followers he immediately started for the house where the conspirators were assembled, seized them, had them executed, and fixed their heads on spikes of iron, as a warning to all traitors.

Peter was by no means satisfied to think that all his vessels in the sea of Azof had been built by foreigners; he wished his own people to learn the art of ship building, as well as other arts, and determined to send great numbers of young men into other countries, to learn to build and sail large vessels; and others to serve in the land forces, that they might become good and distinguished soldiers.

This was considered a terrible thing by the party who were opposed to all changes. It was a new thing for a Russian to leave his country, and the priests in particular made a great outcry against this overthrow of former customs.

But the Czar Peter now determined to do another thing, which caused all Russia to open its eyes in astonishment.

This was to leave his dominions, and go himself into other countries to see what was to be seen, and to learn those arts of which his own people were ignorant. And moreover, he intended to learn these arts by working with his own hands as a day laborer, in the ship-yards, and docks, and manufactories of other countries.

"Now surely our Czar has gone crazy!" said the people, and the priests exclaimed that for the Czar to go into barbarous parts, (as they supposed all foreign countries to be,) was an abomination before the Lord, and had been since the time of Moses, and was contrary to their holy religion.

All this had little influence with Peter, whose mind was made up, and in the same year, 1697, an embassy of two hundred persons, headed by three ambassadors, General Le Fort, the Governor of Siberia, and the Secretary of State, set out to visit other countries, and in the first place, Holland.

In this company, as a private gentlemen, travelled the Czar, attended by a valet, a livery servant and a dwarf, for without one of these little creatures the embassy would have been incomplete. The favorite, Menzikoff, was also in the train. As they passed through Riga, which then belonged to Sweden, the Czar requested to look at the fortifications of the place.

This request was rudely refused by Count D'Alberg, the Governor, who treated the embassy with contempt and insult. This was never forgotten by Peter, and you will see he afterwards made it one excuse for his war upon the Swedes.

At other places they were treated with great hospitality, and while in Germany there was nothing but

feasting and carousing. The tables were attended with trumpets and music, and the eating and drinking were excessive.

While excited by wine, at one of these feasts, the Czar, in a sudden fit of passion, drew his sword upon Le Fort and told him to defend himself. "Far be it from me," replied Le Fort, "let me rather perish by the hand of my master." Peter was immediately overcome with shame, and asked pardon of his kind and useful friend for having so far forgotten himself.

"My great desire is to reform my subjects," said he, "and yet, I am ashamed to say, I cannot govern myself."

The Czar was so anxious to reach the village of Zaandam, or Zaardam as it is now called (the town from which the skipper Musch had gone), and where he expected to learn the art of ship building, that he left the embassy, and hastened on with six of his followers, reaching that place fifteen days before the rest of the party.

It is strange that the first person seen by the Czar was a man of the name of Kist, who was fishing in a little boat, and who had worked as a smith in Russia. This man was at once recognized by some of the Czar's party, who called him to come to them.

The man came, wondering who these strangers might be, and we can well imagine his astonishment

when he found that one dressed like a Dutch skipper, in a red jacket and white trowsers, was the Czar of Russia. Peter told the man he wanted to take lodgings, and would like to take them with him.

The poor man did not know what to say, for his house was a small and poor one, and he would have been glad to excuse himself. He, however, found a poor widow woman, who had a small house back of his own, and who consented to remove to an adjoining hut, and let the Czar have hers. Peter's lodgings now were two small rooms, with a loft over them, and a shed adjoining.

Kist promised to keep the secret as to who his new neighbors were, and when a crowd collected around them, asking curious questions, the Czar, who could speak Dutch, replied that they were all carpenters and workmen from another country, who had come to Zaandam in search of work.

This was a likely story, especially as some of the Czar's followers did not relish the idea of passing for poor day laborers, and so kept on their own rich Russian dresses. Peter, as soon as he arrived, went to find the widows and families of some Dutch ship builders and sailors who had died in Russia, representing himself as a fellow workman of their relations.

The wife of the skipper Musch was very glad to see this friend of her dead husband, and begged him,

if he should ever see the Czar of Russia, to thank him for his kindness in sending her the money, of which she had been much in need. Peter promised that the Czar should certainly receive her message.

And now the Czar was ready to set to work, and he insisted that all his followers should clothe themselves in the common dress of the ship docks. On Sunday crowds would come from Amsterdam, which was not far off, to see these strangers, who, wherever they went, were followed by curious eyes.

This was very annoying to the Czar, who had always a horror of a crowd, and particularly disliked being stared at. His secret had got out, however, through letters written from Dutchmen who were in Russia, and now, wherever Peter went he was pointed at, and one said to another, "Dat is der Czar!"

It would have been annoying to *any one* to find, whenever he looked out from his door on Sundays or holidays, crowds of people collected about, filling all the windows and house tops, and patiently waiting to get a look at him. The poor Czar was obliged at such times to shut himself up in his little hut, till the crowd, becoming discouraged, went away.

Peter now began to work in earnest, by purchasing a small yacht, and fitting a new bowsprit to her with his own hands. The other workmen looked on

with astonishment, to see so great a person working till the sweat ran from his face.

He spent many hours a day in sailing, and the quickness of his movements much astonished the Dutch, who said they had never seen such "loopen, springen, en klauteren over de schepen"—running, jumping, and clambering over the shipping.

Some of the officers and distinguished gentlemen of the town one day politely waited on the Czar, to request him to honor them by his presence to witness the dragging of a ship over a dam. No doubt Peter would have been glad to witness this sight, as he was very curious to see all things new or strange, but seeing a great crowd he exclaimed, "te veel volks, te veel volks,"—"too many people"—and slammed the door, and immediately fell into one of those convulsion fits to which he was subject when in a violent passion.

CHAPTER V.

Peter Bas in the dock-yard at Zaandam—He earns a pair of shoes—His curiosity—The sound tooth extracted—He goes to England—Learns various trades—Annoyed by the crowd—His private habits—Saye's court—How the Czar left it—The call at the palace—The rough ruby.

Let us enter the dock-yard in the little town of Zaandam, as did many others out of mere curiosity in the days of which I am writing. Men are busy on all sides, working with all manner of tools, on the different parts of vessels. But the most active person in the yard is "a tall and robust man, quick and nimble of foot, and rapid in his actions; his face is plump and round; he is fierce in his look, and has brown eyebrows and short, curling hair, of a brownish color. His gait is quick, he swings his arms as he walks, and always holds in one of them a cane."

This cane he is apt to use rather too freely upon any one who is in his way, or whose conduct does not please him. But to his overseers he is perfectly re-

spectful and obedient, doing his work exactly as he is ordered to do it. If any one wishes to speak to him on any matter of importance, he leaves his work, and, with his adze in his hand, goes and sits down on a rough log of timber while he talks, but seems impatient to return to his work again.

This man is known in the dock-yard as Peter Zimmermann, or Peter Bas, (Master Peter.) He lends a helping hand in every part of the work that is going on, whether it be ropemaking, sailmaking, or smith's work.

One day a great English Duke came into the dock-yard, and asked the master to point out to him quietly the Czar, as he wished to see him at his work. A number of men were just then carring a heavy beam by the spot where Peter had sat down for a moment to rest.

"Peter Zimmermann!" called out the master, "why don't you assist those men?" Peter rose at once, and placing his shoulder under the beam, helped to carry it to its place.

Whenever he went where labor of any kind was going on, he insisted upon taking hold and doing part of the work with his own hands. Thus in a manufactory at *Istia*, he forged several bars of iron, making his Russian followers blow the bellows, stir the fire, carry coals, and do the work of the journey-

man blacksmiths. All this they did not much relish, but pretended that it was only play. Peter was the only one who worked in earnest.

When his work was finished, Peter went to the master and demanded his pay. When he received it, he said, "This will buy me a pair of shoes, of which I am much in need," showing his shoes that had already been mended. He took his money, and went and bought a pair of shoes, in which he took great pleasure, as having been earned by his own toil.

"See my new shoes," he would say to his companions, "I have earned them by the sweat of my brow, with hammer and anvil."

His followers often begged off from work, complaining of their sore hands, and one got tired, complained of being sick, and returned to Russia.

When the ambassadors from Russia reached Amsterdam, Peter thought it right to leave his work and take his place in the procession, which was a very magnificent one.

First came the three ambassadors, followed by a long train of carriages, with richly-dressed livery servants on foot; but Peter, in the simple dress of a gentleman, came in one of the last carriages, which, in Holland, was not the place of honor.

All this pomp and show were very disagreeable to him, and he was doubtless longing to return to the

axe and saw, which he did the moment the ceremony was ended. Having learned the art of ship-building, he went through Holland, determined to see every thing that was new.

Now he is to be found upon the Greenland fishing ships, a hundred of which are in the harbor of Texel at once. Here he goes from one part of the ship to another, asking numberless questions as to the manner of catching the whales, boiling the oil, taking out the whalebone, and every thing else belonging to the whale-fishery. Now in the manufactories, the windmills, the markets, always asking questions, and never satisfied till he knows how every thing is done.

The moment his eye lights on any new object, comes the eager question, "Wat is dat?" and when he is told, he exclains "Dat wil ik zien"—"I will see that." In his curiosity, he sometimes went too near the machinery, and one day became nearly entangled, and drawn into some dangerous machine. Another time, he mounted upon an immense crane on a wharf at Amsterdam, when his foot slipped to the ground, severely injuring his leg.

Now he is to be found in the hospitals, learning to draw teeth, to let blood, and to dissect bodies. Anxious to try his hand at some of these surgical operations, he performed upon a poor woman who had the dropsy. As might have been expected, she died,

and the Czar consoled the mourning husband, by paying him the honor of attending the funeral.

Peter always carried with him a case of instruments, and was rather more ready to operate upon those about him for the purpose of showing his skill, than was to them agreeable. One day he saw his valet sitting with a sad countenance, and asked him what was the matter.

"Nothing, sire," he answered, "except that my wife is suffering with the toothache, and refuses to have it out." Now the fact was that the poor woman had not the toothache at all, but the valet, having become angry with her for some cause, wished to be revenged, and knowing that the Czar would never be satisfied if there was a tooth to be drawn, till his pincers were upon it, he took this means of having her put to the torture.

"If she has the toothache," said the Czar, "I will soon cure her." So he ordered the poor woman to sit down, she all the time insisting that she had no aching tooth.

"Ah! that is always the way with her," said the valet, "as soon as the doctor comes; and when he is gone, she is whining and crying again with the toothache."

"Well, we'll soon cure her," said the Czar, "you hold her head and arms;" and putting the pincers in her mouth, he pulled out a perfectly sound tooth.

Peter did not relish the idea of having a trick played upon him more than any one else would; and when he heard how his valet had deceived him, he was much vexed, and called him, and gave him a good whipping with his own hands, which we will all agree the man deserved.

While Peter was in Holland, he was cheered by hearing that his troops at home had gained a victory over the Tartars near Azof, and had also beaten a body of Turkish troops, sent by the Sultan to the assistance of the Tartars.

Having now seen and learned all the knowledge that Holland had to offer, the Czar next turned his face towards England, still travelling as a private gentleman, in the train of his ambassador. King William the Third sent his own yacht to meet him, and also two ships of war. This was in the year 1698.

In England, as at Zaandam, he took a room near the dockyard, that he might be able to give his whole time to gaining instruction in the English manner of ship-building. He soon made himself quite perfect in this business, so that he gave lessons to others, and began to build a ship after the English method, which proved to be a first-rate sailer.

He next took a fancy to learn the art of watch-making, of which, in a short time, he made himself

master. The more we see of this remarkable man, the more cause we have to wonder at his astonishing industry and perseverance; and at the ease with which he acquired every art to which he turned his hands.

We think it enough for one man to learn one branch of art well, even where it is necessary for his support; but here was the Czar of Russia, who might, if he chose, have lived a life of ease and splendor, travelling from country to country, living in poor, mean lodgings, and laboring as hard as the poorest day-laborer, first at one trade, then at another, and according to the historians of his time, making himself perfect in all.

Captain Perry, the engineer, who went with him from London to Russia, says that "from the casting of cannon, to the spinning of ropes, there was not any branch of trade connected with ship-building that he did not minutely observe, and even put his own hand to, as often as he came to the places where those trades were carried on."

Before the time of Peter, the only mode of calculation of which they knew any thing in Russia was by means of balls strung on wires, the use of figures being yet unknown in that country. Peter now engaged persons to go back with him and teach

arithmetic, according to the plan taught in other countries.

Before he left England, he was entertained by King William with an exhibition of a mock sea fight, with which he was much delighted. Little did the English then think that the Czar, who was then looking for the first time at any thing approaching a naval battle, would one day fight with his powerful enemies, the Swedes, and gain victories in the Baltic.

Peter was as much annoyed with the crowds he met in London, and the curious gaze of the people, as he had been in Holland. They would come into his room while he was eating, at which the Czar would rise from the table, and rush out of the room, in a terrible passion. While walking along the Strand with a certain Marquis, a porter with a hod on his shoulder, ran against the Czar, and drove him into the gutter.

Peter was in a great rage, and turned to knock him down, but the Marquis interfered, and asked the man "what he meant, and if he knew it was the *Czar*, against whom he had run so rudely?"

"Czar!" said the man, with a grin. "We are all Czars here." This story would have seemed a more likely one, if it had been told of one of our independent Yankees.

At to the private habits of the Czar, Voltaire

preserves a strict silence, seeming determined to say as little as possible that is not in favor of that great personage. I find by others, however, and I suppose there is no doubt of the truth of it, that his habits were disgustingly filthy; and that, at this time of his life, he was a "glutton and a wine-bibber," to say nothing of beer and brandy.

After living a while in London, Peter expressed a desire to be near some of the King's dockyards, and a beautiful place at Deptford, belonging to Mr. Evelyn, called "Saye's Court," was taken for his residence, and that of his followers. This was near a dock-yard, through the wall of which a door was broken, that the Czar might easily step from his residence into the yard.

This place and the grounds about it were so beautiful that they were the wonder and admiration of all men of taste at that time. There were splendid avenues, and fine long hedge-rows, through which it was the pleasure of the Czar to trundle a wheel-barrow every day.

The house itself was very elegant, and beautifully furnished; but when the Czar and his troop left it, all was ruin and desolation. Mr. Evelyn's servant wrote to him thus, at the time they were there:

"There is a house full of people *right nasty*. The Czar lies next your library, and dines in the parlor next your study. He dines at ten o'clock, and at six at night; is very seldom at home a whole day; very often in the King's yard, or by water, dressed in several dresses. The King is expected there this day. The *best parlor is pretty clean* for him to be entertained in. The King pays for all he has."

Mr. Evelyn himself speaks of "My ruined garden at Saye's Court, thanks to the Czar of Muscovy!" When the Czar and his party had finished their day's work, they would resort to a public house in Great Tower street, to smoke their pipes, and drink beer and brandy.

He went very little into company, and seldom to places of amusement, from his dread of a crowd. He was invited to a grand ball at the palace of St. James, in honor of the birth-day of the Princess, but instead of mixing with the company, he was, at his own desire, put into a small room, from whence he could see all that passed without being seen himself.

When Peter left England, he gave the King's servants one hundred and twenty guineas, which was more than they deserved, as they had treated him with great rudeness. To the King he gave a very valuable rough ruby, which was said by the best

jeweller of Amsterdam to be worth ten thousand pounds sterling.

This splendid ruby the Czar took from his waistcoat pocket, and gave it to the King, *wrapped up in a piece of brown paper*

CHAPTER VI.

The Czar inquires as to different religious sects—The Burgomaster's wig—The rebellion in Russia—Its causes—The Czar's appearance in Russia—Defeat and punishment of the rebels—Various improvements—The dock-yard at Voronitz—Death of Le Fort—Peter a laborer.

While in England and Holland, the Czar made many inquiries as to the different religious sects, and attended churches of different religious denominations, among others, the Quaker meeting; always conforming to the customs of the congregation he worshipped with, and listening to all that was said with respectful attention.

In general, while in these countries he allowed his officers to be very familiar with him, so that they often called him by his name, which seemed to please him. But if at any time he chose to remember that he was Emperor of Russia, and they his subjects, there was nothing for them but to remember it also, and return to their former respectful manner.

The Czar and his officers often held their own

worship in the market-place, and one day being surprised by a shower, he coolly took off the wig of one of his officers, and put it on his own head to protect himself from the rain, while the poor man stood bareheaded, not daring to grumble or remonstrate.

This was not an uncommon thing with the Czar, who often suffered from a feeling of coldness about the head. One Sunday in Holland, he attended church with the Burgomaster, (chief magistrate of the town,) and sat next him in his pew. He was listening with great attention to the preacher, the people in the mean time all looking at *him*.

What was their surprise and amusement, to see Peter suddenly stretch out his hand and seize the Burgomaster's large flowing wig, and place it on his own head! When the sermon was over, he returned the wig with a polite bow, never seeming to think that he had taken rather a disagreeable liberty with one of the great men of the town.

From England Peter went to Vienna, in order to study the military discipline of the Germans, and from there he intended to go to Venice; but the news of a rebellion among the Strelitzes in his own dominions, made it necessary for him to hasten home. The very means he was taking to improve and enlighten his country, were the causes of this rebellion. The noblemen who disliked change began to grumble

that so many foreigners, and such new customs and manners, were to be introduced into the empire. The priests said that their ancient religion was to be overthrown, and a new one introduced in its stead, and the Strelitzes were told that their body was to be broken up and scattered.

Now the old party of Sophia roused up anew, and determined to take her by force from the convent and place her on the throne, and then to prevent the return of the Czar to Russia. They assembled in a large body, and marched towards Moscow, but were met by General Gordon, whom Peter had left in command of his forces, and entirely defeated, and great numbers of them taken prisoners.

To the amazement of all, the Czar, who had travelled privately, and as quickly as possible, now appeared in Moscow. He immediately rewarded those who had defeated the Strelitzes, and then proceeded to punish those unhappy men, of whom the prisons were now full. The leaders, officers and priests of the party, were condemned to death. Some were broke on the wheel; some buried alive; many executed in other ways; and this being in the depth of winter, their bodies were immediately frozen, and were left in the same position in which they were executed, with their heads lying by them.

On all the public roads leading to Moscow, and

all around the three walls of the city were gibbets, on which hung all winter the bodies of the rebels, and it is said that numbers of them were hung about the monastery where the Princess Sophia, and Eudosia, the wife of Peter, were confined; and that from whichever window they looked, the sight of the stiff, dead bodies of those who had fought for them, met their eyes.

Great numbers of the rebel party, with their wives and children, were exiled to Siberia; the band of the Strelitzes was entirely broken up, and their very name abolished. If their crime was great, their punishment was equally so. The lives of many were sacrificed who might have been useful to their country as laborers in the mines, and upon the public works, but the Czar was determined that the punishment should be such as to prevent all thoughts of rebellion for the future.

A Prussian minister who was at that time at the Court of Russia, states in his private memoirs, that at a great entertainment given by Peter about this time, he caused twenty of these unfortunate Strelitzes to be brought into the banqueting room, and at every glass of wine he drank, he struck off a head with his own hand. This story is doubted by many. I see that Voltaire gives a hint of it in his history of Charles the Twelfth, but when he came to write the life

of Peter, some years after, his hero had become such a favorite that he suppressed this, as well as other disagreeable facts in his history.

I find in some authors still more horrible accounts of the cruel punishments inflicted upon these unhappy rebels. But as there is some doubt as to the truth of them, and as the account in which all agree is bad enough, I have contented myself with stopping there.

The rebellion being suppressed, and the troublesome band of Strelitzes entirely broken up, Peter now turned his thoughts to the improvement of his country, and began in reality to introduce the customs and manners of more civilized nations into his own.

The dress of the Russian soldier had before this time been a long, loose coat, reaching to the heels, and confined with a belt around the waist; loose, wide drawers, a high cap, like a helmet, on the head, and a long, bushy beard. These long beards and loose coats were worn throughout the empire by all classes, and Peter determined that they should be abolished, though he knew he should have terrible opposition to encounter in carrying out his plan.

He therefore ordered that all persons should shave their beards and shorten their coats, or pay a certain tax to the government. There were so many, however, who preferred paying the tax to changing any

former custom, that a very considerable sum was thus brought into the treasury of the country.

Schools for the Latin and German, and for instruction in various arts and sciences, were established throughout the empire; and Peter obliged his subjects to go to other countries and trade, which before his time they had been forbidden to do, on pain of death.

The Russians had before this begun their year in September, but feeling the inconvenience of having a calendar different from all the rest of the world, Peter ordered that the year 1700 should begin with the 1st of January, which day was to be celebrated with a jubilee and other rejoicings.

Upon this came a terrible outcry from the priests, who said that the world was made in September, and God meant that the creation should be dated from that month. The people wondered most of all, that the Czar should be able to change the course of the sun.

For a long time there was great confusion, from one party using the new style, and the other the old; but at length the new style was adopted throughout the country, and the Russians began the year with the rest of the world.

Peter now turned his attention to the female portion of the nation, and began to do something to

raise them from the degradation to which woman is doomed in all barbarous and half-civilized countries. Before this time women had not been allowed to associate with the other sex, at feasts or entertainments, or if they were admitted to the room, they were not allowed to sit at the same table.

If all the stories told of the feasts and revels of Peter and his Court are true, I should not wonder if the women had begged that the old state of things might continue. But from this time Peter began by inviting both sexes to his assemblies, and soon the fashion of mixing thus at all entertainments became general.

Peter also did away with the absurd custom relating to marriages, of which I have told you, and from that time the lady, as in other countries, was allowed some choice as to whom she would prefer for a partner for life. A decided improvement this upon the old plan.

The Czar now busied himself with the formation of new troops, obliging the sons of noblemen and princes to serve as common soldiers before they could become officers. He sent other young men to serve in his fleet at Voronitz on the Don, and these were to begin as common sailors before they could rise to command.

Of all this no one dared to complain, as the Czar

himself had set them an example by doing the same thing.

Peter also put down the power of the clergy, and though he did not so call himself, he became actually head of the church in his country. The Patriarch Adrian dying during his reign, he declared that there should for the future be no Patriarch in Russia.

One improvement followed another in rapid succession. The people had never used any thing to write upon but long rolls made of the bark of trees, or of parchment. But the Czar published an order, that from that time, every one should use paper to write upon, as they did in the rest of Europe.

Painted posts to serve as mile-stones were set up on the public roads, and inns for the accommodation of travellers established at certain distances. It is astonishing to see how much was thus accomplished by one man for the improvement of his country, especially when he had to battle all the way against the opposition of those for whose good he was laboring.

All these improvements, and many others, were begun before Peter was thirty years of age.

He now set out to examine his fleet and naval works at Vorintz, but had not been long there, when he received tidings of the sudden death of his friend Le Fort. He hastened back to Moscow in great distress, to attend the funeral, and took his station in

the procession as lieutenant, which was the rank he held in General Le Fort's regiment.

As soon as the funeral was over, Peter returned to his dockyard at Vorintz, where, as in Holland, he wore the dress of the common workmen, and worked harder than any. In a round hat, and jacket and trowers, he was ever bustling about, talking busily with the workmen, particularly with the Dutch, whose language he well understood.

If a poor fellow passes struggling with a heavy wheelbarrow, he runs, and pushing him aside, seizes the handles, and trundles it off with the greatest ease. If a man is awkward in the use of a spade, he snatches it from him, and shows him how to use it to the best advantage. If a man is taken sick, or an accident happens, Peter is the first on the spot to administer medicine or dress a wound, and is particularly delighted if he can find occasion to bleed the sufferer. In all this we find it difficult to recognize Peter the Czar, who at times sits absolute upon his throne, and strikes off heads as a pleasant pastime while he drinks his wine.

CHAPTER VII.

Peter the Great as a warrior—Charles Twelfth—Dangers that threatened Sweden—Charles in a new character—Causes of quarrel between Sweden and the other countries—Battle of Narva—Its result—How Peter bore his defeat—New improvements—Victories of Scherematof.

We come now to Peter the Great as a warrior, and to his battles with Charles Twelfth, King of Sweden. This young king was now (in the year 1700) only 18 years of age, and had as yet shown little interest in the affairs of his country, leaving them to be managed altogether by his ministers.

When the Council assembled to talk over the affairs of the nation, Charles sat cross-legged upon the table, absent, listless, and paying no attention to what was said. But now the ministers of Charles Twelfth were in great trouble, for their country was threatened by the united forces of Russia, Denmark, and Poland, and they met to consult upon the dangerous state of affairs. Some of the members proposed

to settle the matter by negotiation, when, all of a sudden, to their great surprise, Charles rose, and with an air of dignity, like a man who has determined upon his course, he said:

"Gentlemen, I am resolved never to begin an unjust war, nor ever to finish one, but by the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed. I will attack the first who shall declare against me, and after having conquered him, I hope I shall be able to strike terror into the rest."

He then gave his orders for the war, which were received with admiration by his old officers, who were ashamed to appear less hopeful than their King.

The King of Denmark, from whom the Swedes had taken some provinces, determined to do battle against Sweden in order to regain them, and the King of Poland was also bent on recovering provinces which in the former reign had been given up to the King of Sweden; but why did Peter the Great wish to make war with Sweden, and what excuse did he find for beginning the quarrel?

He was determined, as we have all seen, to make a great and flourishing people of the barbarians over whom he reigned. But he saw that this could not be done without ships and commerce, and the latter could not be enjoyed without some means of communicating with the great ocean besides that he already

possessed by means of the port of Archangel, which was on a sea frozen up at least six months of the year.

His desire, in order to get a free communication with the great ocean, was to get possession of some port on that part of the Baltic called the Gulf of Finland, all the provinces surrounding which were now in possession of the Swedes, though they had at one time belonged to Russia.

Upon the town of Riga Peter cast a longing eye, and he determined if possible to regain possession of this valuable seaport; and therefore gladly joined with Poland and Denmark in their league against Sweden.

You remember that when Peter passed through Riga, on his way to Holland, the Governor, D'Alberg, rudely refused his request to see the fortifications of the place. Peter took little notice of this treatment at the time, merely remarking "that he should probably receive more civility at his next visit, for he hoped to see the day when he should have the honor to refuse the same civility to the King of Sweden himself."

And now the war began. And to the astonishment of all Europe, the young King Charles Twelfth, coming out in his new character, entered Denmark, and put an end to the war in that kingdom in less than six weeks; the Danes gladly paying him a large

sum of money, in order to buy him off from laying siege to Copenhagen.

Charles now proceeded to Riga, which was besieged by the King of Poland, who was expecting the Czar to join him, with nearly a hundred thousand men. But the old Count D'Alberg proved to be too able a soldier for the Polish commander to fight with, and the latter soon left the place in despair.

Denmark and Poland being disposed of, there remained now but one enemy for Charles Twelfth to attend to. This was the Czar Peter, whose troops were now encamped before Narva, which you will see near the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland. Through the midst of ice and snow, in the month of November, Charles Twelfth marched on towards Narva to attack the army of the Czar.

Peter, who had an army of sixty, or as some say, eighty thousand men, to oppose to his boy enemy, the King of Sweden, looked upon the town of Narva as already in his possession. He therefore left the command of his forces with the Duke de Croy, who was a German, and Prince Dolgorouki, a Russian officer, while he went to Novorogod to confer with the King of Poland as to the best course to take in the coming war.

It is supposed to be owing partly to the absence of the Czar, and partly to the jealousy between the

two princes who were left in command of the troops, that the Russian army was so terribly beaten.

The young King of Sweden had not quite nine thousand men, and only six pieces of cannon, to oppose to the immense army of the Czar, and the one hundred and forty-five pieces of cannon with which the Russian camp was defended. He, however, hesitated not a moment, but taking advantage of a violent wind, and a terrible storm of snow, which blew directly in the faces of the Russians, he attacked them with great vigor.

The Russians were astonished at the discharge of cannon which they could not see, and never imagined how small a number of men were coming against them. They were thrown at once into great confusion, and had no time to form in the midst of that driving storm; panic soon spread through the army, and they turned and fled.

Some threw themselves into the river Narva, where great numbers were drowned; others laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves to the conquering Swedes. The Duke de Croy and the other officers of the Russian army, dreading the Russians more than the Swedes, surrendered themselves as prisoners to the commander of the Swedish army.

Thirty thousand of the Russians laid down their

arms at the feet of the King of Sweden, and filed off bareheaded and disarmed before him; and then for the first time they discovered that they had been subdued by eight or nine thousand men. The number of those who were made prisoners was four times greater than that of the conquerors.

Perhaps, from not knowing what to do with this immense number of prisoners, the King of Sweden allowed one-half of the Russian soldiers to return, after having disarmed them, and the other half to repass the river with their arms, thus restoring to the Czar troops, who, after being well disciplined, became brave and excellent soldiers. Well would it have been for King Charles had he not met them in battle again!

Great was the gain to King Charles by this victory. Immense magazines, boats loaded with provisions, and all the artillery, fell into his hands, and the whole country was at the mercy of the Swedish army. In less than twelve months the King of Sweden, not yet twenty years of age, had been victorious over the monarchs of Denmark, Poland and Russia, and was looked upon as the first prince in Europe.

Peter, who, as I have told you, had left his army to go and arrange some matters with the King of Poland, heard while on his way of this terrible defeat.

He took it however very calmly, merely saying: "I know very well that the Swedes will have the advantage of us for some time, but they will teach us at length to conquer them."

He at once sent all the troops he could muster to prevent the further advance of King Charles, while he himself went to Moscow, where he issued orders for a great number of new cannon to be cast, to make up for the loss of those taken by the Swedes.

But for this purpose there was not enough metal to be found; the Czar therefore ordered that the bells of all the churches and convents should be taken and cast into cannon and mortars. With these bells were made one hundred large cannon, one hundred and forty-three field pieces, besides mortars and other pieces of artillery. All this the Czar was obliged to superintend in person, or it would not have been properly done.

Peter now went to meet Augustus, King of Poland, to persuade him to continue the war against Charles Twelfth; but though Augustus himself seemed inclined to join with the Czar against Sweden, his people were in no haste to enter into the quarrel, and Peter found that he must depend upon his own strength.

Between the provinces of Livonia and St. Petersburg, lies the large lake of Peipus. Here the Czar

found it necessary to station a large fleet to prevent the Swedish troops from attacking the province of Novorogod, and to be ready to make a descent upon the coasts belonging to Sweden. He therefore employed nearly the whole of the year 1701 in building on this lake one hundred galleys, each to carry about fifty men, while other armed vessels were fitted out on Lake Ladoga.

All these operations Peter himself superintended, and set his new sailors to work. He also brought up his sailors from the river Don and the sea of Azof, and stationed them on Lake Ladoga. While overseeing these immense operations, he constantly visited Moscow, to see that all was going right there, and other provinces to establish new customs, and to see that the old ones were properly observed.

Other princes, as Voltaire says, have gained to themselves a great name by raising public works in time of peace; but that Peter, just after the misfortune at Narva, should apply himself to the work of joining the Baltic, Caspian, and European seas, by canals, has crowned him with more real glory than the most signal victory.

And now Charles Twelfth, who might have carried all before him in Russia, turns from this great country as if unworthy of his notice, and gives his whole attention to Poland, intending to dethrone

Augustus, and then to pursue the Czar even to the very gates of Moscow.

He little thought, that having given the Russian troops lessons in war, he was now giving them time to improve upon them; and that before he was ready to turn his attention to them, they would be quite ready to meet him face to face. Twelve months after the battle of Narva, the Czar's troops were so well disciplined that they defeated one of the best Generals belonging to the King of Sweden.

While Charles was laying all Poland waste, Peter was left at full liberty, not only to recruit and discipline his army, but to design and carry on many great improvements in the empire. He introduced from Saxony flocks of sheep, and shepherds to attend them, in order to have wool fit for making good cloth. He erected linen and paper manufactories, built hospitals, invited from abroad workmen in brass, blacksmiths, and founders, and quantities of ore were brought from the mines of Siberia. Thus in the midst of war he cultivated the arts of peace.

Peter himself moved about with such rapidity, that he almost seemed to his people to have the power of being in several places at the same time. One week he was at Plescow, the next at Moscow, and the third at Archangel, to which place he hurried, on hearing that the Swedes intended to attack the little post he

had established at that place. Here he drew the plan of a new fortress, and himself laid the first stone of the foundation.

And now the Russians began to show the result of their training, in several victories which they gained over the Swedish troops. General Scherematof captured a Swedish frigate on Lake Peipus. He also obtained a victory over a Swedish General, in which he took a great number of prisoners, and four of their colors; and on the 1st of January, 1702, he fell in with the main body of the Swedish troops, near a village named Eresfort.

"As our troops," said the Czar, in his journal, "were new, and but little exercised, and our artillery had not arrived, the enemy threw a great part of our men into confusion, and obliged them to fall back, but on being joined by our artillery, their retreat was stopped. Our men being again formed in order of battle, attacked them with so much vigor, that after an action of four hours, the Swedes were compelled to yield, to abandon their artillery, and fly. The enemy lost in this action the greater part of his troops, as three thousand lay dead on the field of battle. Of our men about one thousand were killed." General Scherematof was made Field-Marshal, and other honors were bestowed upon him.

For this victory thanks were publicly returned,

and salutes, fireworks, and other rejoicings were indulged in. After this victory Peter said: "Well, we have at last beaten the Swedes, when we were two to one against them. We shall by-and-by be able to face them, man to man."

This same General (now Marshal) Scherematof soon gained another and more important victory over the enemy, of which the Czar says:

"With the assistance of God, we compelled them to fly from the field of battle, having not only retaken the artillery, the colors, and the equipage, which they had taken from us, but also killed so many of them, that the few remains of the cavalry were obliged to fly towards the city of Pernow. The marshal, having left behind the infantry, pursued them with the regiments of dragoons; he overtook them a few miles from the city, and routed them afresh. On this occasion we took fifteen pieces of cannon, and sixteen colors, and a great number of prisoners. Our loss was ten officers, and about four hundred soldiers killed."

CHAPTER VIII.

The siege of Marienburg—The young widow—Her eventful story—Change of fortune for the Czar—The "Key City"—Triumphal entry into Moscow.

Upon a small lake on the borders of the province of Livonia, stood the little town of Marienburg, which Marshal Scherematof now reached in his victorious march. In order to take this town by assault, it was necessary to cross the lake on floating bridges; but when the people of the town found that preparations for an attack in this manner were being made, they agreed to give up the place, on condition of letting the inhabitants leave it peaceably, which was granted.

But while the Major who commanded, with two Captains, came to the Russian camp to give up the place, a Captain Woolf and an ensign of artillery, the latter dragging his wife by force, entered the powder magazine, and set fire to it, by which great numbers, both of Russians and Swedes, were blown into the air. In consequence of this, all the inhabi-

tants, now a very small number, were taken prisoners, and the town was entirely destroyed.

Among the prisoners thus taken was a young woman in humble circumstances, who afterwards became Empress of the country to which she was now led captive. General Bauer, before whom the prisoners of war were to file off, was a man of great mildness and humanity, who had risen from the ranks to his present station.

He noticed among the prisoners a very young girl with tears streaming down her cheeks, and evidently in very great trouble. He was so struck with her face and manner, that he ordered her to be taken care of till he had time to talk with her. Her modesty and diffidence, and indeed her whole conduct, charmed the good General, who told her she had nothing to fear, as he would take care that she was well treated. Her story was this:

She was born at Ringen, a small village in Livonia. Her mother had been a very poor woman, supported by Count Rosen, an officer in the Swedish service, and the owner of the village. When she was three years of age, she suffered a double loss, in the death of her mother, and of her mother's friend, Count Rosen. She was then taken into the house of the clerk of the village, who kept a small school for children.

Doctor Gluck, the Lutheran minister of Marienburg, happening to come to this village one day, visited the school, and the moment he saw this little Martha, as she was then called, he took a great fancy to her, and asked the clerk, who was very poor, if he would be willing to part with her. The clerk consented, and Doctor Gluck took her home with him, and treated her like one of his own family. Here she made herself very useful, and soon became a great favorite. At first she knew no language but the Livonian, but under the instruction of Dr. Gluck, she soon became mistress of the German.

As she grew older, her beauty attracted many admirers. Among them all, the only one she liked was a Livonian sergeant in the Swedish army. She would not marry him, however, without the consent of Dr. Gluck. The Doctor, after making inquiries, and satisfying himself that the young man was steady and respectable, and able to support his favorite comfortably, gave his consent, and married them himself.

The very next day Marienburg surrendered to the Russians, and the husband of Martha was killed. It was while weeping, in her distress on hearing this tidings, that General Bauer saw her, and was touched with compassion for her sufferings. He took her home, and appointed her his housekeeper, in which

situation, as we are informed by M. Wurmb, who was tutor in Doctor Gluck's family, "she was a pattern of virtue and good conduct, and while with the General, she was greatly beloved by all his domestics, over whom she was placed."

But she was not destined long to remain in the service of General Bauer. One day, Menzikoff, happening to be at the General's house, saw the young housekeeper, and being much pleased with her appearance and manners, and having heard her history, he asked General Bauer if he would part with her, as he was in want of such a person to oversee the female part of his establishment.

The General would have been glad to refuse, but as he was under great obligations to Menzikoff, he felt that it would be ungrateful to deny his request; and the next day saw Martha in the palace of Menzikoff. Here she was first seen by Peter the Great, when she was seventeen years of age. He became much attached to her, and married her, at first privately, and afterwards publicly, and had her crowned Empress of Russia. After the death of Peter, this wonderful woman, whose life had been one of such extraordinary changes, succeeded to the throne of Russia.

"There had been many instances," says Voltaire, "before this, of private women being raised to the

throne; nothing was more common in Russia, and in all Asiatic kingdoms, than for crowned heads to marry their own subjects; but that a poor stranger, who had been taken prisoner in the storming of a town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire, whither she was led captive, is an instance which fortune and merit never produced before nor since in the annals of the world."

Fortune now seemed to favor the Czar every where. His vessels on Lake Ladoga gained victories over those of the Swedes, driving them to take shelter on the other side of the lake. Look on the map, and find the little river Neva, which runs from the foot of Lake Ladoga through the city of St. Petersburg, the foundations of which were not yet laid.

To gain possession of the river Neva was now the constant aim of Peter the Great, as by that means he would have the communication he so much desired with the Baltic. There is an island in Lake Ladoga, near the spot where this river empties into the lake, upon which stood the strongly fortified town of Noteburg, of which Peter was determined to gain possession, if possible. He gave command of the siege to Marshal Scherematof, he himself acting as Captain of the Preobazinski guards.

The Russians bombarded the town night and day,

from the 18th of September to the 12th of October, and did not succeed in taking it till the Swedish garrison was reduced to less than a hundred men. These few men nobly defended the city to the last, and when obliged to yield, they made honorable terms for themselves. Colonel Slippembac, who commanded them, would not surrender the town till he had sent for two Swedish officers from the nearest post, in order that they might bear witness for him to the King, his master, that eighty-three men, who were all then left in the garrison able to bear arms, besides one hundred and fifty sick and wounded, did not surrender to a whole army until it was impossible for them to fight any longer or to preserve the place.

This shows what a brave enemy the Czar had to contend with, and how necessary it was for him to keep up strict military discipline in his own army. He distributed gold medals among his officers on this occasion, and gave rewards to all the private soldiers, except a few whom he punished for running away during the assault. Their fellow soldiers spit in their faces, as a sign of their contempt for their cowardly conduct, and then shot them.

The name of the conquered town was changed to Shlusseburg, or the Key-town; "because," said the Czar, "it is by this key that the gates of the enemy's country are opened to us." Menzikoff, who had be-

haved most gallantly during the siege, was appointed the first Governor of the place, and the Czar gratified Marshal Scherematof and his other officers, by giving them a triumphal entry into Moscow.

The prisoners, their cannon, colors, and twenty wagon loads of ammunition, appeared in the procession, which passed under three triumphal arches, while cannon were fired, bells were rung, and every other exhibition of joy and delight was indulged in by the people.

Many of the Russian people, as you know, complained of the reforms which the Czar was making in the empire; they did not like new ways and customs, and said "the old are better." Peter now determined to try an experiment, and see whether, in all respects, they actually preferred the old style of things; and therefore on the marriage of one of his sisters, he invited these discontented noblemen and their families, and ordered that every one should dress after the ancient manner, and that all old customs should be observed.

A dinner was served up in the same manner as in the sixteenth century, when things were done in a much ruder style than in the days of Peter. It was an old and superstitious custom not to light a fire on a wedding day, even in the coldest weather. Peter therefore ordered that no fire should be lighted in the

palace, and he probably enjoyed it mightily to see those who cried out against new customs, sitting shivering, and with chattering teeth, and wishing in their hearts that this custom at least might not be revived.

In ancient times the Russians drank no wine, but only mead and brandy. Peter ordered that on this occasion the old custom in this respect should be observed; and when the guests complained, and begged for wine, he answered in a joking manner, "This was a custom with your ancestors, and old customs are always the best."

Whether the supporters of old customs were convinced or not by this return to them for a time, we are assured that at least nothing more was said about the old ways being better, at least as far as these customs were concerned.

The news of this entertainment spread through Moscow, and gave great amusement to the poople, who said one to another, "What a comical man is our Czar!"



CHAPTER IX.

Building of the City of St. Petersburg—Trouble and sickness—The miracle of the Weeping Virgin—Ships visit the new city—New projects of the Czar—Battles—Affairs in Poland—St. Petersburg threatened by a Swedish fleet—Battles and sieges—The Czar unfortunate, but not discouraged.

PETER the Czar now turned his attention to a new project. This was no other than building a city to be called after himself, St. Petersburg, near the mouth of the river Neva, just where it enters the Gulf of Finland. It was indeed a strange spot upon which to found a city, and the idea, to any one but Peter the Great, would have seemed hopeless.

The Neva just here divides into four or five branches, forming several low, flat, marshy islands, in the centre of which had stood a Swedish fortress, which had been taken by the troops of the Czar. Here was begun the city of St. Petersburg, which has now risen to be one of the most magnificent cities in the world.

All around was a marsh, with not a stone of any description; the people had no experience in this

kind of work, and were not furnished with the proper tools, such as spades, shovels, pick-axes, &c., and the weather was intensely cold; but human life was of little account to the Czar.

He brought thousands of people from all parts of the empire, Russians, Cossacks, Tartars, Calmucks, Finlanders, and Ingrians; and when they fell down and died from hard labor and exposure, and when thousands fell victims to a terrible sickness that appeared among them; what mattered it to the Czar? Thousands more could be brought to supply the places of those who fell. It is said that not less than one hundred thousand laborers perished there during the first year.

These channels of the river were deepened, canals dug, the earth heaped up to raise the level of the islands, which were often overflowed. There were no wheel-barrows, and these poor laborers were obliged to bring the earth on which the foundations of this great city were laid from a distance, in the skirts of their clothes, and in bags made of rags and old mats.

But in spite of all these difficulties, the work went on; and in the course of a year there stood upon these once marshy islands, a town said to contain thirty thousand houses, and huts of one kind or another. All this the Czar superintended in person,

taking up his quarters in a small wooden house, which he caused to be built for himself, and which still stands, surrounded by a protecting wall, and is visited by many in memory of this extraordinary man.

One of the first buildings erected was a church, for though Peter had no love for the priesthood, he was very attentive to his religious duties; and wherever he was, regularly attended divine service at some church or other. He also directed many merchants and tradesmen to settle in his new city, and take possession of shops there.

The next thing was the building of a large hotel, and a fine mansion for Prince Menzikoff, who took the management of the Czar's public entertainments upon himself.

But now came trouble among the workmen. The Czar was absent, and had left Count Golofkin to superintend the building of the city. The men, who were suffering from privation and sickness, and were seeing their fellow-laborers drop into the grave in great numbers daily, began to complain loudly, and at length they set off in a vast crowd towards the church.

Count Golofkin endeavored to make his way to the church, but the crowd was so great that he was obliged to return. He was told that the Virgin was so afflicted at the sufferings of her people, in that

horrid climate, that her image in the church was shedding tears, and they felt assured, that some more dreadful fate was hanging over the new city.

Golofkin not knowing what do with the people, sent off for the Czar, who arrived the next day, and went at once to the church to witness the miracle. He ordered all the people to attend, and commanded the priests to show him the wonderful sight of the weeping image of the Virgin.

This he examined attentively; and when he saw something oozing from the eyes, and running down the cheeks, he ordered one of the priests to take down the image. He stripped off the covering behind, and found just near the eyes a little cavity filled with oil, which gradually oozed out and trickled down the cheeks. This he explained to the people, and then ordered the image to be taken to his house, telling the people he meant to keep it in his cabinet of curiosities.

Rapidly rose the City of St. Petersburg; built somewhat after the plan of the city of Amsterdam. The wharves, the canals, the bridges, and the streets, were like that city planted with trees. And now the wish of the Czar, that the Baltic should be a channel of communication for his empire with other nations, seemed to be realized, when he heard that a Dutch ship was sailing into the river.

Auke Wibes, the captain, was most cordially welcomed and entertained, while in Russia; being placed next the Czar at a feast given to him, and treated with every mark of honor and distinction. His cargo of salt, wine, and other provisions, were all purchased by the Czar and his officers, and the skipper himself, and each of his sailors, were presented with a handsome sum of money.

Soon came another Dutch ship, and afterwards an English one, to whose officers and men the same presents were made.

All this time Charles the Twelfth of Sweden was occupied with his designs against Poland, and taking little heed of the operations of the Czar. When his attention was called to the great city growing up so rapidly on the banks of the Neva, he said, "Let Peter amuse himself as he thinks fit in building his new city. I shall soon find time to take it from him, and to put his wooden houses into a blaze.

In order to protect his infant city, Peter (after sounding the depth of the surrounding water himself) fixed upon a spot on which to build the fort of Cronstadt; and after making the model of it in wood with his own hands, he left Menzikoff to superintend the building of the fort, while he went to pass the winter in Moscow, where his presence was much needed.

He hastened the progress of the works on the Vozonitz and the Don, and in a harbor which he had caused to be made on the Palus Mæotis, or the Sea of Azof.

Now when the Turkish government beheld the warlike preparations which were going on so near them, they were much alarmed, and sent a message of complaint to the Czar; but Peter replied that he was as much master in his own dominions, as the Grand Seigneur was in Turkey; and that if he chose to make the Russian power respectable on the Euxine sea, it was no cause of complaint to Turkey.

In the spring when Peter returned to St. Petersburg, he found his fort of Cronstadt, in the bosom of the sea, completed; and having furnished it with artillery, he turned his eyes towards Narva, from which he had been driven, you remember, by Charles the Twelfth.

In order to wipe away the disgrace he had suffered before Narva, he determined to lay siege to it once more, and at the same time to the city of Derpt. Peter was constantly going from one place to the other, to give orders as to the mode of attack, and to encourage the officers and soldiers.

Having heard that the Swedish general Slippembac (who, you remember, so nobly defended the town of Noteburg) was in the neighborhood of Derpt, with a

large body of troops; and expecting every moment that he would appear to the help of the besieged town, Peter determined to try the effect of a stratagem, or deception, by which to draw the Swedes from the town.

In a short time two regiments of foot, and one of horse composed of Russians, in the uniform and having the colors of the Swedes, came up as if to the help of the besieged town. They to all appearance attack the Russians vigorously; who pretend to be struck with panic and to fly. The garrison rejoiced at what they supposed to be this timely aid, and at the dispersion of the enemy, rush from the town to join the pursuit; when the mock enemy join with the pretended fugitives and turn upon them, killing great numbers, and so terrifying the rest, that they are obliged to capitulate and surrender the town.

Now Peter passed on to Narva; which town he assaulted most vigorously, and soon all the outworks were taken, and the besiegers carrying all before them, forced their way into the town, and then began one of those terrible scenes of cruelty and bloodshed, which were so common at that time in the wars of the Swedes and Russians.

But here the character of Peter, barbarian as he was, appears in a most amiable light. At least for the time the impulse of his mind seems to have been

towards mercy; and he ran from place to place, to save life and to check the cruelty of the soldiers; and having killed two of the ruffians who refused to obey his orders, he entered the town-house whither the citizens had run in crowds for shelter, and throwing his sword wet with blood upon the table, he cried:

"This sword is not stained with the blood of your fellow-citizens, but with that of my own soldiers, which I have spilt to save your lives."

All this time, while the Czar Peter was every where gaining victories over the Swedish generals, Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden, seemed as if blind to his growing strength and skill in the art of war, and was busying himself in making and dethroning kings in Poland.

Augustus, King of Poland, was, through the influence of Charles, dethroned by his people, who were obliged by this monarch to declare Stanislaus Leczinski king in his stead. Augustus assembling a small force still true to him, declared Stanislaus a rebel and a traitor, and proceeded to fight for the crown, which had been so rudely snatched from his head.

Peter who now had a fine and well disciplined army, and was able at length to meet the Swedes man to man, sent to his ally, Augustus, a force of twelve thousand men; and as soon as Derpt and

Narva were disposed of, he hastened with a still larger body of troops, to the assistance of Augustus.

During his absence a Sweedish fleet put to sea with the intention of destroying St. Petersburg, and the fortress of Cronstadt, which was but just finished. This was quite a formidable fleet, consisting of twenty-two ships of war, besides six frigates, two bomb-ketches, and two fire-ships.

From these vessels a numerous body of troops landed on a small island, to prepare for the attack; but a Russian colonel who commanded a regiment there, ordered his men to lie flat on their faces, while the Swedes were coming on shore; and then rising suddenly, they threw in upon them so brisk and well directed a fire, that the Swedes were put to confusion, and forced to retreat hastily to their ships, leaving behind them all their dead, and more than three hundred prisoners.

Still the fleet hovered about the coast, and threatened the newly-built city; the troops made another descent, but were driven off as before, and a large body of Swedish soldiers advanced by land, but they were all defeated, and driven back. They therefore abandoned the attack, and St. Petersburg remained in security.

Numerous battles were now fought between the army of the Czar and the Swedish troops, in those

provinces bordering on the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland, it being still the great aim and object of Peter, to obtain possession of the forts upon those seas, in order to the establishment of his navy.

In some of these battles the Swedes were victorious, in others the Russians. One considerable place taken by Peter, was the town of Mittau in the province of Courland not far from the Gulf of Riga. In the Castle of Mittau were vaults, where the Grand Dukes of Courland were buried.

It had been the custom with the Russian troops, to steal or destroy whatever they could lay their hands on, after taking the town of the enemy; but at the battle of Narva, Peter made such alterations in this custom, and laid such strict commands upon his soldiers as to their conduct for the future, that from that time no such violence was committed.

The Russian soldiers finding the bodies of the dead dragged from their tombs beneath the Castle of Mittau, and stripped of their clothing and jewels, refused to take possession of the post till a Swedish colonel had been sent for, who gave them a certificate that this outrage had been committed by the Swedes themselves.

For a time now every thing seemed to conspire against the Czar. Charles the Twelfth was carrying all before him; the Russians were murmuring and

discontented with the restraint which the new state of things imposed upon them; there were insurrections in parts of the empire, and the treasury was nearly exhausted. But all these misfortunes, which would have discouraged almost any other monarch, seemed only to rouse Peter to new efforts.

He hurried from one part of the empire to another, quelling revolts, silencing complaints, and securing the possession of places he had already taken. He then went to meet the dethroned King Augustus, to comfort him under his misfortunes; promising to revenge his cause, and after presenting him with men and money, he returned as usual to pass part of the winter in Moscow, to encourage the arts and sciences, and to enforce his new laws there.

CHAPTER X.

Tidings of the approach of Charles the Twelfth—Battle of Grodno—The disgraceful course of Augustus—The story of General Patkul—His imprisonment and death—Indignation of the Czar—The throne of Poland declared vacant—Designs of Stanislaus and Charles.

HARDLY was Peter reeurned to Moscow, when tidings were brought that Charles the Twelfth, who had been every where victorious, was marching to attack the Russian troops at Grodno. King Augustus had fled before him in great haste, and had taken refuge in Saxony with four regiments of Russian dragoons.

Peter hastened to his assistance, but found all the avenues to Grodno occupied by Swedish troops, while his own were scattered. But without being in any way discouraged by this state of things, Peter set about raising troops to aid the dethroned monarch, and joining him, he gave battle to the Swedish army.

Here the Russian troops suffered a terrible defeat, in a great part owing to the conduct of a French regiment fighting in the service of Augustus, and

having charge of the artillery, who, when they saw the army of Charles approaching, laid down their arms, and desired to enter the service of the Swedish King.

The desertion of this regiment was followed by the overthrow of the Russian army, of which few men saved their lives, and almost all were wounded. Voltaire says that it is pretended by the Swedish historian of those times, that the Swedish word at this battle was, "In the name of God," and that of the Russians, "Kill all;" but he says it was the Swedes who killed all who came in their way.

The Czar himself says that a great number of his army who were taken prisoners, were murdered in cold blood, three days after the battle. A Russian officer being hardly pushed by the enemy, ran for protection to King Stanislaus, who had formerly been one of his friends; but while Stanislaus held him in his arms, he was shot dead by a Swedish General.

This was the fourth battle the Russians had lost against the Swedes, who had also gained many other victories in Poland. Peter now busied himself in preparing for the safety of his army, which he sent under Prince Menzikoff as far south as Kiow. He flew from one place to another, overseeing the repairs of one city, putting another in a state of de-

fence, planning new conquests, and endeavoring to assist his ally, King Augustus of Poland.

But now Augustus being hardly pursued by the victorious Swedes, and flying with his mother, his wife, and his son, and the principal nobility of his country, determined upon a course so mean and disgraceful, as to consign his name to everlasting infamy.

He sues for peace, treats secretly with King Charles, promises to give up for ever all right to the crown of Poland, and to acknowledge Stanislaus as lawful king. He renounces all treaties he has made with Peter the Czar, his former friend and ally, and promises to deliver up all Swedish prisoners, and deserters.

But the crowning disgrace of Augustus was the delivery to the Swedish king, of John Patkul, the ambassador of the Czar, a brave Russian officer who was at that very time fighting in the cause of Augustus. He had before this, on some false pretence, caused Patkul to be arrested and thrown into prison.

The melancholy history of this unfortunate officer has left a stain upon the character of Charles the Twelfth, which nothing can wipe out. Charles the Eleventh had been very severe in his treatment of the Livonians, to whose country Patkul belonged, and

had cut off many of their privileges, and stripped them of part of their estates.

General Patkul was the one selected by the nobility of Livonia, to carry an account of their grievances to the king, and to beg for redress. At the head of six Livonian gentlemen, he waited upon the king, and in respectful, but bold and manly language, he addressed him, and claimed that their former privileges should be restored to his countrymen.

Charles the Eleventh, who could play the hypocrite to perfection, laid his hand upon the shoulder of Patkul and said, "You have spoken for your country like a brave man, and I esteem you for it; go on." Yet in a few days after, he caused this very man to be declared guilty of high treason, and as such, to be condemned to death.

Patkul concealed himself for a time, and then made his escape into Poland, where he was admitted to the presence of King Augustus, from whose service he passed into that of the Czar, by whom he was sent as ambassador to the court of Augustus, after Charles the Twelfth ascended the throne of Sweden.

This king to whom he was sent as ambassador, and in whose cause he was bravely fighting, meanly, and treacherously seized upon his person to grtaify the malice of Charles the Twelfth, which still pursued the

banished man, and threw him into prison in the Castle of Konigstein, in Saxony.

When Augustus saw that one of the conditions of the treaty with Charles the Twelfth, was that Patkul should be delivered up to him, he was puzzled what course to pursue. The Czar on the one hand loudly insisted that his ambassador should be returned to him, while Charles threatened him with terrible and speedy vengeance, if Patkul were not delivered into his hands.

Augustus now, in the hope of pacifying both these powerful monarchs, and also of saving his own honor, sends his guards to seize the unhappy man, and deliver him into the power of the King of Sweden. But at the same time he sends secret orders to the Governor of Konigstein to let the prisoner escape. The Governor, however, knowing that Patkul was rich, determined not to let him escape until he had paid a handsome price for his liberty.

The brave Patkul refused to pay for that which was his right, and before the matter was settled, the guards sent by Augustus arrived, and seizing upon the prisoner, delivered him up to four Swedish officers; by whom he was carried to the general quarters of the Swedish army, where he remained for three months, tied to a stake with a heavy iron chain.

Charles the Twelfth forgetting that Patkul was

the ambassador of the Czar, and looking upon him only as his own subject and a traitor, ordered a council of war to try him with the utmost severity. He was condemned to be broke alive upon the wheel, and then to be quartered.

Patkul was engaged to be married to a beautiful and lovely lady of Saxony; and the marriage was to have taken place about the time that was fixed on by King Charles, for this terrible torture and death. When the chaplain entered the cell of the prisoner, and informed him that he was sentenced to death,—though he told him not of the terrible manner in which it was to be executed—the spirit of the brave man was broken; and he fell upon the bosom of the chaplain, and poured out his agony in a flood of tears.

Weakened by his long confinement in prison, and tortured by hope deferred, can we wonder that when thus informed of the end of all his hopes, and the blighting of his most cherished plans, this man who had braved death in so many battles, should have wept like a child?

He begged the chaplain to wait upon the lady to whom he was to have been married, to give her all the consolation in his power, and to tell her that he died full of tender love to her. When he was brought to the place of punishment, and saw the wheels and stakes, the truth burst upon him of the terrible torture

through which he was to pass, and the fearful death he was to die.

Overcome with agony, he fell into the arms of the minister in strong convulsions; the good man kindly threw his cloak over him, to screen him from the eyes of the bystanders, and wept over him as he embraced him. Then a Swedish officer read aloud the following sentence:

"This is to declare, that it is the express order of his majesty, our most merciful lord, that this man, who is a traitor to his country, be broke upon the wheel, and quartered, in order to atone for his crimes, and to be an example to others; that every one may beware of treason, and faithfully serve his king." At the words "most merciful lord," Patkul cried out, "What mercy?" and at those of "traitor to his country,"—"Alas!" said he, "I have served it but too well."

Stretched and bound upon the dreadful wheel, he received sixteen blows, and suffered the longest and most excruciating torture, that can be imagined. Thus died the unfortunate John Reinold Patkul, ambassador and general of the Emperor of Russia. Those who looked upon him only as a rebel and traitor, said that he deserved death; but those who considered him as a Livonian, and remembered that he had been banished, because he had boldly de-

fended the rights of his countrymen, called him a martyr to the liberties of his country.

It was in 1707 that this unfortunate gentleman was put to death. According to his sentence his body was quartered, and his mangled limbs remained exposed upon gibbets till 1713; when Augustus having regained his throne, caused these relics of his own perfidy to be gathered together. They were brought to Warsaw in a box, and delivered to Augustus, in the presence of the French minister.

Turning to him Augustus merely said, "These are the limbs of Patkul," without any other remark; and no one else dared to speak upon so delicate and mournful a subject.

The Czar Peter was highly indignant at this barbarous conduct of the King of Sweden, in thus insulting and injuring him, in the person of his ambassador; and at the cowardice and treachery of his ally, Augustus. He wrote to the principal monarchs of Europe, complaining of this violation of the law of nations. By some of his counsellors, it was proposed that he should take revenge by like cruelties upon the Swedish officers who were prisoners at Moscow, but Peter rebuked them severely for such a suggestion.

He determined, however, to revenge himself by following up the plan agreed upon between Augustus

and himself at Grodno; to leave no means untried to drive Stanislaus from the throne, and thus overthow the designs of Charles on Poland.

For this purpose the Czar, finding that Augustus had renounced his protection and his crown, held several conferences with certain of the Polish nobility, at one of which the throne of Poland was declared vacant, and an election for King was proposed. .Peter had taken his son Alexis, then seventeen years of age, with him to this meeting; but a report having been circulated, that he intended to propose his son as a candidate for the throne of Poland, he sent him away to Moscow. This young prince, the history of whose misfortunes you will hear in the course of this story, was the son of Eudocia, the first wife of Peter, who still remained a prisoner in the monastery of Susdal.

Nothing was decided upon in these conferences, except that there was now no king in Poland, over which country a regent was appointed to rule while others were "fighting for the crown." Stanislaus, however, had been acknowledged as king by most of the sovereigns of Europe, and having left Charles in Saxony, was now advancing into Poland with a large force, and was received as lawful king in every place through which he passed. This was in the year 1707.

While Stanislaus was thus advancing into Poland, Charles the Twelfth, having received large contributions of men and money in Saxony, had made up his mind that he would fight the Czar of Russia once more, and advanced towards his dominions with an army of 50,000 men; a force which it would seem impossible for the Czar to withstand, when we remember that at Narva his great army was entirely defeated by eight thousand of the Swedes.

There had been an effort made by some of the powers of Europe to bring about a reconciliation between the King of Sweden and the Czar, but Charles would not listen to such a suggestion. He replied proudly, "I will treat with the Czar in Moscow." How far he succeeded in carrying out this bold threat, we shall see after a time. It was on this occasion that Peter said, "My brother Charles wishes to act the part of an Alexander, but he shall not find a Darius in me," referring to the victories of Alexander, to his pursuit of Darius into the heart of his own kingdom, the death of that king, and the destruction of the Persian empire.

CHAPTER XI.

Charles advances towards Russia—The peasants and their ambassador—Escape of the Czar at Grodno—A terrible march—The passage of the river Berezine—Battle at another stream—Mysterious change in the plans of Charles.

It was in the month of August, 1707, that Charles the Twelfth of Sweden began his march with his 50,000 troops, from Saxony towards Russia, in the full confidence that he should every where be victorious over the armies of the Czar, and drive him to sue for peace in his own capital.

The road through which he passed was the most difficult he could have chosen. The country had been ravaged by war, and was bare of every thing. There were morasses, and deserts, and forests, to be passed, and the inhabitants, who had concealed themselves in these morasses, determined to make Charles pay well for his passage.

Six thousand of the peasants, therefore, dispatched an old man as their ambassador to speak to King

Charles. This old man was a very extraordinary figure, and clothed all in white, and armed with two carbines, he advanced before King Charles, and made the speech which had been prepared for him.

Some of the Swedish soldiers who stood by, not very well understanding what the old man said, made short work of their reply, and cut him down and killed him before the King's face, while in the midst of his harangue. The peasants in a rage flew to arms, but what could these poor creatures do against the army of the King of Sweden?

They were pursued and seized, and obliged to hang one another; the last man being compelled to put a rope round his own neck, and hang himself; and after burning all their houses to the ground, the great army passed on. We could hardly believe this story, were it told only by the enemies of Charles, but as it is also related by a Swedish historian, who was present, we see no reason to doubt its truth.

In the month of January, 1708, we find Peter with a body of troops at the town of Grodno, and Charles advancing through the frosts and snows of a Russian winter to attack that place. He was within two leagues of the town, before Peter was aware of his approach. Charles, hearing just then that the Czar himself was at Grodno, took eight hundred of his troops, and set out in all haste for the town.

Through a mistake of one of his officers, the Czar came very near falling into the hands of Charles. As the small body of troops approached one of the gates of the town, a German officer who commanded there, supposing of course that the whole terrible army of the King of Sweden was upon them, instead of disputing the passage with them, left it open, and took to flight.

The alarm now spread through the whole town. The few Russians who made any resistance were cut to pieces, and the Czar was assured by all his officers that the victorious army had made itself master of the place. Hereupon Peter thought it best to retreat, and Charles planted a guard of thirty men at the very gate through which the Czar had just retired with two thousand of his troops.

That very day Peter was informed by a Polish deserter that he had fled before only eight hundred men, and that the main body of the Swedish troops was still some leagues distant. He immediately returned, and forced the Swedish guards to give way. An engagement took place in the streets and public places of the city of Grodno, and no doubt the Czar would have driven the troops of Charles from the town, had not the whole Swedish army just then appeared in sight. The Czar was now obliged to

leave the town in the hands of that victorious King who made all Poland tremble.

From the town of Grodno to the river Boristhenes, (now the Dneiper,) there is nothing but morasses, deserts, and immense forests, which the Swedes who pursued the Czar were obliged to cut down as they went, in order to clear a passage for the troops and baggage. This part of the country was also subject to epidemical disorders, which had been spread by poverty and famine. Peter posted his troops so as to command the passes of the rivers; guarded all his important posts; and did all in his power to impede the march of the enemy.

He sent a large body of troops to lay waste and destroy the country through which Charles must pass; and then retreating, he gradually led the Swedish troops into that part of the country from which, if defeated, he would find it almost impossible to retreat, while his own army, in case of being obliged to retreat, would have a country to pass through which would afford plenty of subsistence.

After being detained by continual rains, and the many other obstacles which hindered his march, Charles found himself in the month of May, on the banks of the little river Berezine, not many miles from the Dneiper. Here, in sight of the Russians posted on the opposite bank, he threw a bridge over

the stream, crossed it with his army, beat the Russians who guarded the passage, and soon reached another little river, where the Czar had posted a large body of troops to check his progress.

This little river was only a brook in dry weather, but at this time it was swollen by the rains to a deep and rapid stream. On the other side was a morass, behind which the Russians had thrown an entrenchment, defended by a large and deep ditch, and covered by a parapet, lined with artillery.

It must have required some little courage to determine thus to cross a rapid river, and to wade a marshy swamp, with an army, exposed all the time to a vigorous fire from the artillery of the enemy. But Charles the Twelfth never stopped to deliberate upon the circumstances surrounding him, to inquire into the condition of his enemy, or to think of fear. He went on the principle that the Swedes could not be beaten.

Seeing his men busy, according to the customs of war, in preparing pontoons, and erecting batteries to cover their passage, he cried out, "When will you have done with this trifling?" and flung himself into the river, followed by his regiment of guards. The water was as high as their shoulders, but their numbers broke the force of the current, and thus in the face of the fire of the Russians, they forded the river, and waded the marsh.

The Swedish army then drew up, and attacked the Russians, seven different times, and it was not until the seventh attack, that the Russians gave way. It was now plain that the Czar had succeeded in disciplining his troops; and this victory, while it covered Charles Twelfth with glory, should have assured him that it might yet be a difficult matter for him to succeed in his expedition in this distant country, where his army must wade rivers, and march through woods and swamps, fighting every step of the way, against an army every day becoming better fitted to oppose their march.

But the Swedes, being accustomed to carry all before them, dreaded neither danger nor fatigue. The Russians, driven from all their posts, retreated, and crossed the Boristhenes, or Dneiper, which river was then the eastern boundary of Poland, and divided that country from Russia.

In his pursuit of the Czar, Charles Twelfth paused at the little town of Mohilow, on the Dneiper, the very last town in Poland, on the boundary of Russia, and which, like all frontier towns, belonged sometimes to one country and sometimes to the other. It was expected by his own army and by the Russians that Charles would now push on directly to the City of Moscow, to carry out his threat of forcing the Czar to make peace in his own capital; but to

the astonishment alike of friends and foes, Charles now determined to turn towards the Ukraine, the country of the Cossacks, a region lying in the southern part of Russia. What tempted him to take this step no one could imagine. It was going, as it seemed, towards certain destruction, and indeed proved the ruin of Charles and his army. But the mystery was soon explained.

CHAPTER XII.

Mazeppa—An explanation of the conduct of King Charles—Difficulties of the march—Mazeppa appears, and how—The Czar attacks the Swedes under Lewenhaupt—A three days' battle, and its result.

Did you ever read Byron's story of Mazeppa, the General, or Hetman, as he was called, of the Cossacks, who, having fallen in love with the wife of a Polish gentleman, was seized by the husband, and bound naked upon a wild horse? The horse, which was brought out of Ukrania, returned to his own country, and carried along with him the unfortunate man, half dead with hunger and fatigue.

Mazeppa is represented by Byron as telling the story to Charles Twelfth one night in a forest, where they had sunk down exhausted, while flying from the Russians after the battle of Pultowa. Charles compliments Mazeppa upon his care of his horse, and his fine horsemanship, when the old Hetman remarks,

"Ill betide
The school wherein I learned to ride."

Charles insists upon knowing to what he alludes. Mazeppa then proceeds to tell the story of his love, long years ago, when he was a youth in Poland, of the jealousy of the Count Palatine, and of his strange and terrible mode of vengeance.

"Bring forth the horse!—the horse was brought,
In truth he was a noble steed,
A Tartar of the Ukraine breed,
Who look'd as though the speed of thought
Were in his limbs: but he was wild,
Wild as the wild deer, and untaught,
With spur and bridle undefiled—
'Twas but a day he had been caught;
And snorting, with erected mane,
And struggling fiercely, but in vain,
In the full foam of wrath and dread,
To me the desert-born was led;
They bound me on, that menial throng,
Upon his back with many a thong;
Then loosed him with a sudden lash!
Away! away! and on we dash!
Torrents less rapid, and less rash.
* * * * * * *
"Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind;
* * * * * * *
Town—village—none were on our track,

But a wild plain of far extent,
And bounded by a forest black;
But fast we fled, away, away,
And I could neither sigh nor pray;
And my cold sweat-drops fell like rain
Upon the courser's bristling mane.

We rustled through the leaves like wind,
Left shrubs, and trees, and wolves, behind;—
By night I heard them on our track;
Their troop came hard upon our back,
With their long gallop, which can tire
The hound's deep hate, and hunter's fire:
Where'er we flew, they followed on,
Nor left us with the morning sun."

And thus, through forests, and deserts, struggling through marshes, and swimming the deep, rapid rivers, the wild horse carries Mazeppa, into the country of the Ukraine.

The Cossacks of the country were kind to him, and gave him assistance, and he remained among them, and became so famous in fighting for them against their enemies, the Tartars, that the Czar at length made him Prince of Ukrania. Gratitude should have bound him to his master, but for some fancied slight received from Peter, this old man of seventy turned against him, betrayed his benefactor, and took up the cause of Charles of Sweden, hoping

that he would be able to induce his whole nation to join in the rebellion.

It was Mazeppa then, who had induced Charles to turn from his road to Moscow, by promising him provisions, ammunition, and artillery, and that the people of the Ukraine would receive him with open arms, and look upon him as their liberator from the oppression of Russia.

Charles now was certain of being able to subdue the Russian empire, after being joined by so warlike a people as the Cossacks. He expected to be joined by an army of sixteen or seventeen thousand men, from Livonia, under General Lewenhaupt, who was to bring with him also a great quantity of warlike stores and provisions.

He never took the trouble to reflect whether the Czar was within reach of this army, and might possibly cut off these expected supplies. He took no pains to find out whether Mazeppa was in a condition to fulfil his promises, whether he had influence enough to carry with him his whole nation, or whether his own army was provided for in case any of these promised helps should fail; but imagined that even if Mazeppa should prove faithless, he could trust to his own good fortune.

And so Charles passed on beyond the Dneiper, towards the Desna, between which two rivers he

expected to meet Mazeppa, accompanied by thirty thousand men, and bringing stores and provisions, and all his treasures, which were immense. The officers of Charles, who knew nothing of this treaty with the Cossacks, or why he thus turned from his proposed route, continued their march with grief and distress.

Charles sent out orders to General Lewenhaupt to bring all his troops and provisions with haste into Ukrania, as he intended to pass the winter there, that he might the more easily conquer the whole country of Russia in the spring.

The difficulties and obstacles they had before met with, were as nothing compared with those which now opposed their progress. They were obliged to cross a marshy forest one hundred and fifty miles in length. The army strayed from the right road, and had marched four days before Charles discovered his mistake. It took them a long time to regain the main road, and they then found that they had lost nearly all their artillery and wagons, which were quite sunk in the mud.

At last, after a terrible march of twelve days, during which they had eaten every thing in the way of provisions that they had taken with them, the army, exhausted with hunger and fatigue, reached the banks of the Desna, at the very spot where Mazeppa

had appointed to meet them. But instead of finding there the Hetman of the Cossacks with his powerful army, what was their surprise to see on the other side of the river, a body of Russians awaiting their approach.

King Charles, though much astonished, determined at once to cross the Desna, and attack the enemy. The banks of the river were so steep that they were obliged to let down the soldiers, man by man, with ropes. The river was crossed by the army, some on floats hastily put together, and others by swimming. The body of Russians not being more than eight thousand men, made little resistance, and soon gave gave way before the advancing Swedes.

Charles advanced further into this desolate country, uncertain of his road, and wondering what had become of Mazeppa. At length the Hetman of the Cossacks appeared, but more like a fugitive begging for assistance, than the powerful ally they expected. His design had been discovered, the Russians had fallen upon the Cossacks, and cut them in pieces. Thirty of his principal friends, having been taken sword in hand, had been broken on the wheel.

His towns had been burned to the ground, his treasures stolen, his provisions seized; and it was with the greatest difficulty that he himself escaped,

with six thousand men, and some horses, laden with gold and silver.

This is one account given by Voltaire, of the reason of the forlorn condition of Mazeppa when he at length joined King Charles. I find in another history, however, that this same Voltaire gives a different account of the same matter. He says that Mazeppa set out from his own country with fifteen or sixteen thousand of his people, having induced them to join him by telling them that they were going against the King of Sweden. But when they came within a few leagues of the Desna, he made them acquainted with his real design.

These brave people, he says, heard him with disdain, and refused to betray a monarch against whom they had no cause of complaint. They accordingly returned home, and sent the Czar an account of the desertion of their chief to the Swedish army.

Then the Russians went down, and seized upon all Mazeppa's treasures, and a large magazine, which was intended for the use of the King of Sweden. The Cossacks chose another Hetman; Mazeppa was publicly excommunicated; after which, he was hanged in effigy; and those of his friends who could be seized, were broken on the wheel. Which of these stories is the true one, I cannot tell; but as far as Charles the Twelfth was concerned, the result was the same.

Charles hoped that this disappointment would be made up by the arrival of General Lewenhaupt, with his fifteen thousand Swedes, ammunition and supplies. At length, however, this General arrived, in much the same condition as Mazeppa. The order to join King Charles had not reached him by twelve days as soon as it should have done. As soon as possible after he received it, however, he began his march.

The Czar, who knew of his movements, allowed him to pass the Dneiper, and as soon as his army got between that river and the smaller ones that empty into it, he crossed over and attacked him with his united forces. General Lewenhaupt, who had only fifteen thousand men, and who firmly believed that the Czar had an army of forty thousand, (though in reality it was only half that number,) did not hesitate to advance against the Russians, and give them battle.

At the first attack, the Swedes killed fifteen hundred Russians. The Czar's army was then thrown into great confusion, and fled on all sides. The Emperor of Russia saw himself on the point of being entirely defeated. He well knew that the safety of his kingdom depended on the fate of that day, and that he should be utterly ruined should he suffer Lewenhaupt to join the King of Sweden with a large army.

The moment the Czar saw his troops begin to

flinch, he ran to the rear guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks were posted, and cried out to them: "I charge you to fire upon every man that runs away, and even to kill me if I should be so cowardly as to fly."

He then endeavored to rally his forces, and continue the battle; but Lewenhaupt, preferring rather to join his master than to lose time by the way in fighting, chose to continue his march. The next morning the Czar attacked him near a morass, and extended his lines with a view to surround him.

The Swedes faced about on all sides, and the battle was kept up for two hours, with great courage and obstinacy on both sides. The loss of the Russians was three times greater than that of the Swedes, but they still kept their ground, and the victory remained undecided.

In the afternoon, the army of the Czar received the addition of a fresh body of troops. The battle then began again for the third time with more fury and eagerness than ever, and lasted until night put an end to the combat. At last the Swedes were routed, and driven back to their baggage.

General Lewenhaupt rallied his troops behind the wagons; the Swedes were beaten, but they scorned to fly. They were still about nine thousand in number, and not so much as one man deserted.

The General drew them up with as much ease as if they had not been conquered.

The Czar remained all night under arms, and forbade his officers on pain of disgrace, and his soldiers on pain of death, to leave their ranks for the sake of plundering the bodies of the dead. Next morning the battle began again. Lewenhaupt had retired a few miles to a fine situation for his army, after having spiked his cannon, and set fire to his wagons.

The Russians arrived in time to seize upon about six thousand wagons, before they were burned. The Czar, determined on the total defeat of the Swedes, sent one of his Generals to attack them for the fifth time. The General offered them honorable terms, if they would surrender. Lewenhaupt refused, and fought a fifth battle, as bloody as any of the former.

Of the nine thousand soldiers he had left, he lost about one-half in this action, and the other remained unbroken. At last, night coming on, Lewenhaupt, after having sustained five battles against the army of the Czar, passed the river Sossa, with about five thousand soldiers that remained.

The Czar lost about ten thousand men in those five engagements, in which he had the glory of conquering the Swedes, and Lewenhaupt that of disputing

the victory for three days, and of effecting a retreat without being obliged to surrender.

Thus he at length reached the camp of Charles, with the honor of having made a noble defence, and cutting his way through unheard of dangers, but bringing with him neither ammunition nor an army.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sad plight of Charles and his army—Obstinacy of the King—The Czar's offer to Mazeppa—Pultowa—The siege and the battle—Accident to King Charles—The dinner in the Czar's tent—The way the Czar treated his "masters in the art of war."

CHARLES was now in an unfortunate plight. He was cut off from all communication with Poland, surrounded by enemies, and in the heart of a country where he had nothing to depend upon but his own courage and skill. And now came on the winter of 1709, far more terrible in that country than with us. Charles the Twelfth, still bent on making all the Ukraine declare for him, passed on into that country, making long marches in that bitter cold weather, with men almost naked, and with no boots or shoes.

They were so far from Sweden that they could no longer hear from, or send messages home. In this condition, only one officer ventured to complain.

"What!" said the king to him, "are you uneasy at being so far from your wife? If you are a good soldier, I will lead you to such a distance that you

shall hardly be able to receive news from Sweden once in three years." Cold comfort this, for the poor home-sick soldier.

One day a soldier ventured, in the presence of the whole army, to hand to the King, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread, black and mouldy, made of barley and oats, which was all the food they then had, and of which, even, they had not enough. The king took it coolly, ate it up, and then said to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten."

Thus, by partaking uncomplainingly of all their hardships, and faring no better in any respect than the common soldiers, Charles won the respect and confidence of his followers, and silenced all attempts at complaint. In this deplorable situation, Count Piper, one of the Generals of Charles, who never gave his master any but wise and good advice, urged him to pause at a little town which they had reached in the Ukraine, and intrench his army there, where he might get supplies by the aid of Mazeppa, till the terrible cold was over.

But Charles replied that he was not a person to shut himself up in a town. Piper then begged him to return to Poland, and put his troops into winter quarters. But with his usual obstinacy, Charles refused. He said this would be flying before the Czar, which he could not consent to do; that the

season would soon grow milder, when he must reduce the Ukraine, and march on to Moscow.

In January the cold became so intense that both armies were obliged to remain inactive, but on the 1st of February they began fighting again, in the midst of frost and snow. Charles crossed the whole country of the Ukraine, burning villages wherever he went, and laying waste the entire region through which he passed. Peter kept a strict eye on all his motions, and saw the Swedish army dwindling away by degrees.

In the month of April, Charles found his army reduced to eighteen thousand men. These were kept from perishing with hunger by the supplies brought them by Mazeppa. At this time the Czar made proposals to Mazeppa to return to his duty, and submit to his authority again.

But Mazeppa, perhaps fearing the punishment of the wheel, by which his friends had suffered, or perhaps determined to revenge their death, remained true to his new friends, and refused to return to the service of the Czar.

Charles now having passed the country of the Ukraine, found himself in a region where he could get no provisions for his army, and was at length obliged to face about, and return upon his steps over the very country he had just been laying waste. His

suffering and starving army swept away the few remaining cattle from the peasantry, who, in return, murdered the soldiers, whenever they were strong enough to contend with them.

Thus, for three months, Charles continued foolishly marching, and returning upon his steps, while his army were daily wasting in numbers and strength. In the month of May, he reached a little river on which stands the town of Pultowa, a place that had been garrisoned by the Russians, and was filled with an abundance of provisions and ammunition.

From this town there are many passes through the mountains, leading to the high road to Moscow, and as Charles was still bent on bringing the Czar to make conditions of peace in the capital of his empire, he concluded that the first step towards that end would be the taking of the town of Pultowa. With this view, he laid siege to it with his eighteen thousand Swedes, in the beginning of May, 1709.

It was here that Peter expected him. He had arranged the different divisions of his army at short distances from each other, so that they might all join together easily, to march against the besiegers. He had visited all the southern countries of Russia, and the harbors on the river Don, and the sea of Azof, and had been employing himself in repairing forts,

cleansing harbors, and building ships, and thus preparing for the defence of his dominions.

As soon as he heard that the army of Charles had laid siege to the town of Pultowa, Peter hastened to gather his forces. The horse, dragoons, infantry, Cossacks, and Calmucks, gathered from different quarters. His army was well provided with necessaries of every kind, cannon and ammunition of all kinds, provisions, and even medicines for the sick. In all these he had the advantage of Charles.

On the 15th day of June, Peter appeared before Pultowa, with an army of sixty thousand men. He at once sent Menzikoff with a body of troops, to pretend he was about to offer battle to the besiegers, who left their trenches to meet the coming enemy. By that means Menzikoff was able to throw into the place a large number of troops to assist in its defence.

When Charles discovered this manœuvre, he could not help saying, "I see well that we have taught the Muscovites the art of war." And now began the battle which was to decide the fate of Russia, Poland, and Sweden, and of the two most famous monarchs then in the world, on whom the eyes of all Europe were fixed.

Charles the Twelfth was illustrious for nine years of victories; Peter, for nine years of fatigue, spent

in training up his troops, that they might equal the Swedes. Charles famous for having given away dominions; Peter for having civilized his own. Charles in love with danger, and fighting only for glory; Peter never flying from danger, and fighting only for interest. Charles had the title of invincible, (or unconquerable,) of which one unhappy moment robbed him; the world had given Peter the title of Great, not for his victories, but for having polished a savage nation.

On the 27th day of May, which happened to be his birth-day, Charles went out to see for himself the condition of the enemy, and as he was returning to his camp, he received a shot which pierced his boot, and shattered the bones of his heel. His suffering was intense, but no one perceived the slightest change in his countenance, and he continued twelve hours on horseback, giving orders to his officers with the greatest composure.

One of his servants, noticing the blood trickling from the sole of the king's boot, hastened to call the surgeons, and the pain had now become so intense, that they were obliged to lift him from his horse, and carry him into his tent.

The surgeons examined the wound, pronounced it in great danger of mortification, and said the leg must be immediately taken off; which caused great grief and distress to the army. But one of the surgeons

who had more skill and courage than the rest, said that by cutting deeply he could save the King's leg.

"Fall to work then at once," said Charles; "cut boldly, and fear nothing." He himself held the leg with both hands, and watched the whole operation with as much coolness as if it had been made upon another person. While still confined to his bed, he heard that Peter was preparing to give him battle; and not thinking it consistent with his honor to remain to be attacked in his intrenchments, he gave orders to go out and meet the enemy, he himself being carried in a litter, at the head of the foot soldiers.

The Swedes began the battle, which soon became general, and the armies on both sides fought as if they knew the fate of the nations to which they belonged depended on that day's work. Every where Peter and Charles were in the thickest of the fight, and exposing themselves to the very hottest of the fire. It seemed as if both sovereigns bore charmed lives.

Charles, with a pistol in his hand, was carried in his litter from rank to rank; one of the bearers was shot and the litter shattered to pieces. He then ordered his soldiers to make a litter of their pikes, and carry him on it. In one history Voltaire says, that of the twenty-four bearers who relieved each other in carrying him, twenty-one were killed.

Peter received several shots through his clothes and hat, and others pierced his saddle, and Prince Menzikoff had three horses shot under him. Without giving the details of this battle, for I fear my story here is becoming tedious, I will only say that after a terrible struggle on both sides, victory at last declared in favor of the Russians. The Swedes were taken on all sides, and fell into confusion, and Charles was obliged to fly before him whom he had hitherto treated with such contempt.

This very hero, who could not mount his saddle during the fight, now fled for his life on horseback. He suffered most terrible pain, which was increased by the mortification of having been conquered by the Russians, whom he had so despised, and by distress at hearing that many of his brave officers had been taken prisoners by the enemy.

King Charles spoke not a word for many miles; but at length he inquired what had become of Count Piper? "Taken prisoner," was the answer. "And Renschild?" he asked. The answer was the same, and so of many others of his officers and friends.

"Prisoners to the Russians!" said Charles, shrugging his shoulders; "come, then, let us go to the Turks!" He continued his flight in haste with the remnant of his army, till he reached the banks of the Dnieper. The victorious Russians still pursuing

them, the Swedes crossed the river in all haste; Charles and Mazeppa in a small boat, some of the army in barks, or on floats, and some by swimming their horses across. But of all the foot-soldiers who attempted to cross the rapidly flowing river, not one single man reached the other side.

On the evening of this famous battle, Peter dined under his tent in company with his officers, and invited also the Swedish officers, who had been taken prisoners in the fight, to the entertainment. In the course of the evening, Peter gave this toast:

"To my masters in the art of war." "And whom," asked General Renschild, "is your majesty pleased to honor with such a title?"

"Yourselves, gentlemen," answered the Czar, "the brave Swedish generals."

"Then," asked Renschild, "has not your majesty been somewhat ungrateful in dealing so hard with your masters?"

Peter was rather pleased at this compliment, and turning to the General, he asked him what number of men the King of Sweden actually had in the field. On hearing the number, he said,

"How is it possible that a monarch so prudent as the King of Sweden, could have thought of leading such a handful of men into a country unknown to him, and especially into such a country as this?"

To this Renschild replied, "It is not always that I and my brother officers are consulted respecting the operations of war, but as faithful subjects we all feel it our duty not to oppose, but to obey our king."

The Czar was so delighted with this reply, that he took his own sword from his side, and presenting it to Renschild, requested he would wear it as a token of esteem, not alone for his valor, but also for his fidelity to his sovereign.

In spite of the admiration of the Czar, real or pretended, for the Swedish officers, most of these his "masters in the art of war," with the lower officers, and all the private men, were soon sent as exiles into the wilds of Siberia. There had been no arrangement made before this battle for the exchange of prisoners. Peter had once proposed it, but Charles rejected the offer with disdain; and his troops were in every thing the victims of his pride and obstinacy.

CHAPTER XIV.

Changes effected by the battle of Pultowa—Charles Twelfth at Bender—His application to the Sultan—The Turks determine on war—Catharine declared Empress—Her influence over the Czar—The toilsome march towards the Pruth.

The effects of this battle of Pultowa were felt all over Europe, and changed the condition of things in many a kingdom. We soon find Stanislaus abdicating the throne of Poland, and Augustus restored to his dominions by Peter, and all Poland acknowledging the Czar as its protector. Sweden was in a state of consternation and distress, supposing her king to be dead; and now Peter laid siege to Riga, and conquered and brought under his power again those countries upon the Baltic, which had once belonged to Russia.

He then turned to St. Petersburg, to inspect the progress of his new and favorite city; laid with his own hands the keel of a large ship of war, and then hastened to Moscow, where he found the inhabitants

in a great state of excitement, preparing for one of those splendid triumphal processions, of which they were so fond, and by which they meant to express their sense of the great and important services rendered by the Czar to his country.

In his flight towards Turkey, Charles Twelfth and the small remnant of his troops reached the town of Bender, on the river Dniester, which was then the boundary of Turkey. Here he was advised to write to the Grand Vizier, as is the custom among the Turks; but, obstinate as usual, he refused, saying it would be demeaning himself too much; and in this way he made enemies of the Turkish ministers, one after the other. "In short," says Voltaire, "he knew not how to accommodate himself, either to times or circumstances."

Now that fortune had turned against King Charles in one part of the world, it seemed to abandon him every where. A terrible distemper which had appeared in Livonia now passed into Sweden, and made fearful havoc among the people, thinning the population of the towns, and in Stockholm alone carrying off thirty thousand persons.

Part of the army of King Charles had remained behind in Poland. The Czar and many of the surrounding kings and dukes joined together to make this army useless to Charles, by compelling the gen-

eral who commanded, to declare himself neutral. Those who governed affairs in Stockholm, in the absence of the king, hearing no news of him, and supposing him to be dead, and distracted with the mortality that was sweeping off the inhabitants of the city, were glad to agree to this arrangement, by which it was solemnly promised that the Swedish army should not march to the assistance of their monarch, in any part of the world.

When Charles, who was all this time at Bender, heard this news, he received it as one of the severest blows that had yet befallen him. He could not bear that his army should be so tied up and governed by others, and sent word to his senate at Stockholm, that "he would send one of his boots to govern them."

Charles now sent an ambassador to the Vizier at Constantinople, begging him to prevail upon his master, Achmet III., who was at that time Emperor of the Turks, to commence hostilities against the Russians, assuring him that the next movement of the Czar would be to invade the empire of Turkey. This ambassador returned, telling Charles that "he had succeeded so well in his mission that the Vizier had promised him that he would take Charles in one hand and his sword in the other, and conduct him to Moscow at the head of two hundred thousand men."

However much this ridiculous boast might have pleased the King of Sweden, his joy was soon damped by hearing that the envoy of the Czar was in high favor at the Court of Turkey, and that he had demanded, and was all but promised that the traitor Mazeppa should be delivered up to the Czar, as the unfortunate General Patkul had been to Charles. The old Hetman of the Cossacks however escaped this fate by taking a disease of which he died, before the Czar succeeded in getting him into his power.

But though Charles failed in his object through the Vizier of Constantinople, he succeeded at length by means of the Khan of Crim Tartary, or the Crimea as it is now called. This Khan had beheld with great jealousy the growing power of the Czar in the Black Sea, and was exceedingly anxious to get rid of so formidable a neighbor.

He went therefore to visit Charles Twelfth at Bender, and together they drew up such a statement of complaints against the Czar, as thoroughly to arouse the jealousy of the Sultan. The Khan then went to Constantinople, and was admitted to the presence of the Sultan, to whom he confirmed all that was said in this statement, adding that the Russians were committing all sorts of ravages on the frontiers of the Turkish provinces, murdering innocent believers, and plundering them of their property.

He concluded by begging that the great Council should at once be called together, to decide what should be done in view of the dangers which now threatened the Turkish empire. The Council met and decided that there was nothing to be done but to go to war immediately.

Without any warning of this determination, the ambassador of the Czar was at once arrested in the streets of Constantinople, and with thirty of his servants was thrown into the castle of the Seven Towers.

"Never," says Voltaire, "was sovereign more insulted in the person of his ministers, than the Czar of Russia. Within the space of a few years, his ambassador at the Court of London was imprisoned for debt; his minister and general in Poland was broken on the wheel, by order of the King of Sweden, and his envoy to the Turkish Emperor was seized and imprisoned at Constantinople, like a common criminal."

And now that war was declared, the troops of the Czar gathered from all quarters of the great empire of Russia, and took their march toward Turkey.

On the very day on which he set out upon the expedition, the Czar caused it to be publicly declared that Catharine, the captive of Marienburg (for in her baptism her name was changed), whom he had before

privately married, was the true and lawful wife of Peter the First, and Empress of Russia.

Catharine went with the Czar to the war in Turkey, accompanied him in all his excursions, and most fatiguing campaigns, shared in all his toils and dangers, and by her gentle and lovely manners, and her devoted attentions, made herself so necessary to her husband, that he was never so happy as when she was near him.

Indeed, her presence is said to have wrought like a charm when he was suffering from the spasmodic affection, to which he had been subject from a child. Wherever she was, she was immediately sent for, and the moment she spoke to him, his muscles relaxed, his mind became tranquil, and "Peter was himself again."

Like the effect of the tones of David's harp upon the monarch of Israel, when tormented by the evil spirit that troubled him, was the presence of this fascinating woman upon the Czar of Russia, when agonized by the strange malady to which he was a victim.

She stood in the same relation to the Czar that the kind-hearted Josephine did to Napoleon. Both possessed the art of soothing the passion, and of softening the anger to which their husbands were liable. Both ascended an imperial throne, but here the

parallel ends. One was most undeservedly cast aside; the other maintained her high station, and after her husband's death, succeeded him, as Empress of all the Russias.

General Gordon says: "She was a very pretty, well-lookt woman, of good sense, but not of that sublimity of wit, or rather, that quickness of imagination, which some people have believed. The great reason why the Czar was so fond of her, was her exceeding good temper; she never was seen peevish, or out of humor, was obliging and civil to all, and never forgetful of her former condition, and, withal, mighty grateful." Many a wretch escaped the effects of the Czar's wrath by her interposition. "Catharine," says Voltaire, "saved more backs from the knout, and more heads from the block, than General Le Fort had ever done." Great, indeed, must have been the merit of this woman, who, having risen to the most elevated station, from an obscure, and almost unknown origin, maintained her lofty position without incurring the envy, hatred, or even jealousy, of those over whom it was her destiny to rule.

"Catharine," says Coxe, who cites from competent authorities, "maintained the pomp of majesty, united with an air of ease and grandeur; and Peter frequently expressed his admiration at the propriety with which she supported her high station, without

forgetting that she was not born to that dignity. She bore her elevation meekly, and was never, as Gordon asserts, forgetful of her former condition. When Wurmb, who had been tutor to Gluck's children, at the time that Catharine was a domestic in the same family, presented himself before her, after the public solemnization of her marriage with Peter, she said, 'What! thou good man, art thou still alive? I will provide for thee;' and gave him a pension. She was no less attentive to the family of her benefactor, Gluck, who died a prisoner at Moscow: she pensioned his widow, made his son a page, portioned the two eldest daughters, and appointed the youngest a maid of honor."

A part of the Russian army, under General Scheremetof, were now on the banks of the river Pruth, and in danger of being surrounded by an army of Turks and Tartars. The Czar determined to hasten to their relief, and, if possible, to prevent the Turks from crossing that river to meet him. Large bodies of troops under different generals were expected to meet him here, but to his disappointment none of them arrived; and he found himself on the banks of the Pruth with an army of less than forty thousand men.

Before Peter passed the Dnieper, foreseeing the dangers and toils of the march before them, and fear-

ing they would be too great for Catharine to endure, he gave a general order for all the women who attended the army to be sent away. Catharine, however, was not thus to be disposed of. She insisted upon accompanying his majesty, and knew well that she would not be refused.

She urged her husband in such strong terms to allow her to accompany him, that he found it impossible to refuse. The soldiers with great delight beheld her on horseback at the head of the army, for she seldom rode in a carriage. Her presence gave encouragement and joy to the troops; she was always ready to send refreshments and assistance to the sick, and extended her care even to the meanest soldier.

After they passed the Dnieper, there was a large tract of desert country to pass through, then to cross the Bog, and afterwards the Dniester, and then another desert to traverse, before they came to the banks of the Pruth. Through all this terrible and fatiguing march, Catharine kept up untiring cheerfulness and courage, and animated the whole army by her example of patient endurance.

The presence of this noble woman proved the salvation of Peter, his army, and perhaps of Russia, all of which were placed in great danger by the hasty and imprudent movements of the Czar. The army at length came in sight of the town of Jassi, on the

banks of the Pruth. Here Peter met with many disappointments; troops and supplies which were promised him, failed; he was too far from Poland to receive any aid from that country, and was in a wild and barren region, destitute of provisions and forage.

In this situation, Peter did not hesitate to say that he found himself in much the same condition with his "brother Charles," when invited into the Ukraine by Mazeppa. To add to their misfortunes, great swarms of locusts appeared, which obscured the face of the sun when in flight, and covered the ground when at rest. These ate up every blade of grass, and every green herb.

The army suffered much for water in their march through sandy deserts, under a scorching sun; and what little they did procure, was brought in vessels to the camp from a great distance. During all these sufferings and privations, Peter had the satisfaction to find that not a man deserted, and no murmur escaped from his army.

The Russian soldier has always sustained the character which was formed under Peter. "He will not," says a writer, who knew them well, "fall back one step while his commander bravely keeps his ground; he contents himself with extremely little pay, and with very slender diet, and is always cheerful; hungry and thirsty, he traverses the heavy sands of the deserts,

under the load of his accoutrements; without murmuring or complaints, executes every command; deems nothing impossible or too difficult; does every thing that he is ordered, without shunning any danger; and is inventive of a thousand means for accomplishing his design."

With men like these, the Czar was about to encounter a force vastly superior to his own in point of numbers. The enemy was close at hand, for the Grand Vizier, having heard that the Russian army had arrived on the banks of the Pruth, immediately put his troops in march, and crossed the Danube at the head of two hundred thousand men to meet him

CHAPTER XV.

The Grand Vizier's invitation to Charles, and his answer—Battle of the Pruth—The Czar in convulsions—Catharine's mediation—A treaty of peace, and its conditions—Contemptible offer of Charles—His insult to the Grand Vizier—The Czar goes to Carlsbad—The Prince Alexis.

In marching along the Pruth, as he came near to Bender, the Grand Vizier dispatched an ambassador to Charles Twelfth, to invite him to visit him, and inspect his army. Charles, however, would not condescend so far, but insisted that the Grand Vizier should pay him the compliment of calling upon him first.

When the ambassador returned with this answer of the King of Sweden, the Grand Vizier, turning to the Khan of the Turks, said, "This is just what I expected; that the proud infidel would behave in this manner."

When the Turkish army reached the opposite side of the river Pruth, Peter dispatched a body of troops to oppose their passage, but they were too late; the

Turks had already constructed bridges, and were crossing the river; upon seeing which, the Russians were obliged to retreat, closely pursued by the Turks, till the Czar came in person to their assistance.

The Russian army were now in great suffering, from the want of provisions and water; for though the river was near, they were exposed to such a constant fire from the Turks on the other side, that no water could be procured. Peter now thought it best to retreat, under cover of the night, but the army had no sooner begun its march, than the Turks pursued them.

The Russians turned, and defended themselves bravely, killing a great number of their enemies, and at last drove them back. But every thing was against them: the Turkish army was many times larger than that of the Russians, and the latter were perishing with hunger and thirst.

In this desperate condition of his affairs, all the accounts and memoirs of those times agree that the Czar paused and questioned within himself, whether or not he should go on, and expose his wife, his army and his country, to certain destruction. He returned to his tent, oppressed with anxiety, and immediately fell into one of those terrible convulsions to which he was subject, and which were often brought on by great excitement of mind.

Unwilling that his grief and distress should be made public, he gave orders that no person should be admitted to his tent. But Catharine, hearing of his suffering condition, forced her way into his presence, and now Peter found how happy it was for him that he had suffered his wife to accompany him upon this expedition.

A wife like Catharine, who had faced death in its most horrible shapes, and had exposed herself like the meanest of the soldiers to the fire of the Turkish artillery, had an undoubted right to speak to her husband, and to be heard. The Czar, soothed by the magic of her presence, listened to what she had to say, and at last suffered her to persuade him to try and send to the Vizier with proposals of peace.

It had always been the custom in the East, that when any people applied for an audience of the sovereign, or his representative, they must not presume to approach them without a present. Catharine, therefore, on this occasion, mustered the few jewels and trinkets she had brought with her, and went round the camp, collecting all the plate and jewels that could be found; for which she gave her own receipt, and a promise to pay the owners on her return to Moscow.

To these she added two black foxes' skins, and what money she could collect, which she sent by an officer with a letter from Marshal Scherematof to the



CATHERINE SOOTHING THE CZAR WHILE IN CONVULSIONS.

Grand Vizier; and after considerable delay in making the necessary arrangements, a treaty of peace was concluded.

The Czar alludes to this in his journals; and also in 1723, when he caused the Empress Catharine to be crowned, he gave this public testimony to her usefulness to him at that time: "She has been," he said, "of great assistance to us in all times of danger, but particularly at the battle of the Pruth, where our army was reduced to twenty-two thousand men."

Some hours elapsed before the messenger sent to the Grand Vizier returned; and it was feared that he nad either been killed or detained as a prisoner by the Turks.

A second messenger therefore was sent, with copies of the former letters; and a council of war was held, at which Catharine was present. At this council the following resolution was signed by ten general officers:—

"*Resolved*, If the enemy will not accept the conditions proposed, and should insist upon our laying down our arms and surrendering at discretion, that all the ministers and general officers are unanimously of opinion to cut their way through the enemy, sword in hand."

After waiting, as they supposed, a sufficient length of time, the Russians left the camp, and marched

towards the enemy, when the Vizier proclaimed a suspension of arms between the two contending armies.

The terms proposed by the Grand Vizier were that the Czar should return with his troops to his own country; should restore Azoph; give up his harbors and possessions on the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azoph; that for the future he should no more interfere in the affairs of the Poles and Tartars, and that Charles Twelfth should be allowed to return unmolested to his own dominions.

As soon as this treaty was concluded, Charles Twelfth, forgetting in his haste his great dignity, went to see the Grand Vizier, who remembering the haughtiness of the King of Sweden at Bender, would not go himself to meet him, but sent two pashas to conduct him to his tent, where he received him. Charles began the conversation, by reproaching the Vizier for not taking the Czar prisoner, when he had him in his power.

But the Vizier coolly asked, "Had I taken the Czar prisoner, who would have governed his empire?" adding, "*All kings* should not leave their own dominions."

Bruce adds that Charles then proposed to the Vizier to give him twenty thousand of his troops, and

he would yet seize upon the person of the Czar, and bring him a prisoner to Constantinople.

"God preserve us," said the Vizier, "from breaking a treaty of peace without any more reason, as I have already received hostages for the performance of it."

Being still urged to agree to the proposal of Charles, the Vizier said that it would be a violation of that part of the treaty which provides "that the King of Sweden may return into his own dominions, through the Czar's territories, with a strong envoy of Turks, after which, if he pleases, he may make peace with the Czar."

King Charles, on hearing this, looked full at the Grand Vizier, and laughed in his face, without making any answer, and then turning short on his heel, he purposely tore the Vizier's robe with his spur, mounted his horse, and rode off in great anger.

"Charles," says Voltaire, "gained nothing by his journey, but the pleasure of tearing the Vizier's robe with his spurs; while this officer, who was in condition to make him repent the insult, seemed not to notice it, in which he was certainly greatly superior to King Charles."

Bruce, who was sent express to Constantinople, relates the following melancholy story: "At our setting out (from the Pruth) Colonel Pitt had the mis-

fortune to lose both his wife and daughter, beautiful women, by the breaking of their coach wheel; by this accident they were left so far in the rear that the Tartars seized and carried them off. The Colonel addressed himself to the Grand Vizier, who ordered a strict inquiry to be made, but to no purpose. The Colonel, being afterwards informed that they were both carried to Constantinople, and presented to the Grand Seignior, obtained a pass, and went thither in search of them; and getting acquainted with a Jew doctor, who was physician to the seraglio, the doctor told him there had been two such ladies as he described lately presented to the Sultan; but that when any of the sex were once taken into the seraglio, they were never suffered to come out again. The colonel, nevertheless, tried every expedient he could devise to recover his wife, if he could not get both, till becoming outrageous by repeated disappointment, and very clamorous, they shut him up in a dungeon; and it was with great difficulty he got released, by the intercession of some of the foreign ambassadors at the Porte; and he was afterwards told, by the Jew doctor, that his wife and daughter had both died of the plague."

There were great rejoicings in Constantinople, when the news of this treaty reached that city; and the Russian ambassador who had been a prisoner in

the Castle of the Seven Towers, was immediately released. Peter at once began his march back to Russia, and sent to have his fortresses on the Black Sea, and the Sea of Azoph demolished.

This was a hard thing for Peter to do, as one of his favorite plans was that of possessing a fleet upon those seas, and thus of having a communication with other countries through these waters, as well as by means of the Baltic.

On his return from this campaign, the Czar found his health so much injured that it became necessary for him to go to Carlsbad, (a town in Bohemia, famous for its mineral springs,) to drink the waters. From thence he went to Dresden, where his son Alexis, who was at that time in his twenty-second year, was waiting his arrival.

This young prince was the son of Peter and Eudocia, the wife from whom he was separated, and who was still shut up in the monastery of Susdal. In telling you the story of this unfortunate son of the Czar, and in speaking of his character, and his miserable end, I have a difficult task to perform. The stories that are told of the treatment of the prince by his father are so varied, and the views taken of the conduct of the Czar in this matter so very different, that I have hardly been able to determine whose testimony to take, or whose account to give.

By some the Czar is called harsh and cruel, a poisoner and a murderer; by others he is held up as a model sovereign and father, exercising the Roman virtue of sacrificing his own feelings as a parent, to the good of his empire. I shall tell you the story as it is told by many authors, historians, and letter-writers of the time of Peter the Great; and if I err in favoring the Czar too much, the "hundred years hence" has come when it is "all the same" to him, and to the people of his time.

CHAPTER XVI.

The marriage of Alexis—His character—Celebration of the Czar's old wedding—Romantic story of the brother of Catharine—The war carried into Sweden—Triumphal procession—Promotion of Rear Admiral Peter.

After the Czar joined his son Alexis, they proceeded together to Targow, to the marriage of the latter to the sister of the Empress of Germany. The bride of Alexis was an amiable and accomplished young lady of eighteen years of age, and the Czar hoped by marrying his son to one so lovely and interesting, to draw him from his wicked courses, and to influence him to lead a better life, and one that became the successor to the throne of Russia.

For the young prince is represented by many writers of his time as being a disobedient son, and entirely given up to dissipation and excess of every kind. Catharine was not present at this marriage, for as yet she was acknowledged as Empress only at the Court of the Czar, and he feared that in Germany

she might not be received with the honor which was really her due.

As soon as this marriage of the Prince was over, Peter hastened to join Catharine, and took her with him to St. Petersburg, where on the 26th of February, 1712, *his Majesty's old wedding* was solemnized with great splendor and rejoicing, and with fireworks and illuminations.

A few years after the marriage of Catharine with the Czar, a circumstance happened which has much the air of romance. Voltaire says it is related in a curious manuscript of a person who was at that time in the service of the Czar, and who speaks of it as a thing to which he was an eye-witness. I will tell the story in the words of Voltaire :—

" An envoy from King Augustus to the Court of Peter the Great, being on his return home through Courland, and having put up at an inn by the way, heard the voice of a person who seemed in great distress, and whom the people of the house were treating in that insulting manner which is but too common on such occasions; the stranger, with a tone of resentment, made answer that they would not dare to use him thus, if he could but once get to the speech of the Czar, at whose court he had perhaps a more powerful protector than they imagined.

" The envoy, upon hearing this, had the curiosity

to ask the man some questions, and, from certain answers he let fall, and a close examination of his face, he thought he found in him some resemblance to the Empress Catharine; and, when he came to Dresden, he could not forbear writing to one of his friends at Petersburg concerning it.

"This letter, by accident, came to the Czar's hands, who immediately sent an order to Prince Repnin, then Governor of Riga, to endeavor to find out the person mentioned in the letter. Prince Repnin immediately despatched a messenger to Mittau, in Courland, who, on inquiry, found out the man, and learned that his name was Charles Scavronsky; that he was the son of a Lithuanian gentleman, who had been killed in the wars of Poland, and had left two children then in the cradle, a boy and a girl, who had neither of them received any other education than that which simple nature gives to those who are abandoned by the world. Scavronsky, who had been parted from his sister, while they were both infants, knew nothing further than that she had been taken prisoner in Mariensburg, in the year 1704, and supposed her to be still in the household of Prince Menzikoff, where he imagined she might have made some little fortune.

"Prince Repnin, agreeably to the particular orders he had received from the Czar, caused Scavronsky to be seized and conducted to Riga, under pretence of

some crime laid to his charge; and, to give a better color to the matter, at his arrival there, a sham information was drawn up against him, and he was soon after sent to Petersburg, under a strong guard, with orders to treat him well upon the road.

"When he came to that capital, he was carried to the house of an officer of the Emperor's palace, named Shepleff, who, having been previously instructed in the part he was to play, drew several circumstances from the young man in relation to his condition; and, after some time, told him, that although the information which had been sent up from Riga against him was of a very serious nature, yet he would have justice done him, but that it would be necessary to present a petition to his majesty for that purpose; that one should accordingly be drawn up in his name, and that he (Shepleff) would find means that he should deliver it into the Czar's own hands.

"The next day the Czar came to dine with Shepleff at his own house, who presented Scavronsky to him; when his majesty, after asking him abundance of questions, was convinced, by the natural answers he gave, that he was really the Czarina's brother: they had both lived in Livonia, when young, and the Czar found every thing that Scavronsky said to him in relation to his family affairs, tally exactly with what his wife had told him concerning her brother, and the

misfortunes which had befallen her and her brother in the earlier part of their lives.

"The Czar, now satisfied of the truth of the young man's story, proposed the next day to the Empress to go and dine with him at Shepleff's; and when dinner was over, he gave orders that the man whom he had examined the day before, should be brought in again.

"Accordingly he was introduced, dressed in the same clothes he had worn while on his journey to Riga, the Czar not being willing that he should appear in any other garb than what his unhappy circumstances had accustomed him to.

"He interrogated him again, in the presence of his wife; and the MS. adds that, at the end, he turned about to the Empress and said these very words:—"This man is your brother; come hither, Charles, and kiss the hand of the Empress, and embrace your sister."

The author of this narrative adds further, that the Empress fainted away with surprise; and that, when she came to herself again, the Czar said, "There is nothing in this but what is very natural. This gentleman is my brother-in-law; if he has merit we will make something of him; if he has not, we will leave him as he is."

"I am of opinion," adds Voltaire, "that this speech

shows as much greatness as simplicity, and a greatness not very common. My author says, that Scavronsky remained a considerable time at Shepleff's house; that the Czar assigned him a handsome pension, but that he lived a very retired life. He carries his relation of this adventure no farther, as he made use of it only to disclose the secret of Catharine's brother; but we know, from other authorities, that this gentleman was afterwards created a count; that he married a young lady of quality, by whom he had two daughters, who were married to two of the principal noblemen of Russia."

The rejoicings made by the Czar upon his own public marriage and that of his son, were not of the nature of those which only exhaust the public treasury, and are then forgotten without effecting any permanent good. He completed the great works he had begun, finished highways, built ships, dug canals, and erected public buildings, and St. Petersburg soon had the air of a flourishing city.

This city was now made the capital of the Empire; and he employed a great number of Swedish prisoners in beautifying the place, whose foundations had been laid upon their own defeat.

Peter being bent on still further humbling Sweden, determined to carry the war into that country, intending, if possible, to take possession of every town which might in future times be dangerous to St.

Petersburg. In the mean time Charles Twelfth, against whom Russia, Poland, Denmark, Prussia, and Germany were united, remained at Bender, quarelling with the Turks, on whose charity he was subsisting; and contenting himself with sending to those who governed affairs in Sweden during his absence, to make all possible resistance against these powers, both by sea and land.

The whole of the year 1713 was spent in battles and sieges of various places in Pomerania, a country lying on the southern shore of the Baltic sea, which then belonged to Sweden, but now forms part of Prussia. Without giving you the details of these various battles, suffice it to say, that the Czar gained many victories both by sea and land, over the Swedes, who had formerly beaten him every where.

After gaining a glorious victory on the Gulf of Finland, he returned to St. Petersburg, where his joy was increased by the news of the birth of a daughter, who, however, died about a year after. He celebrated this event by a triumphal entry into his new capital, and instituted a new order in honor of his wife, which he called the Order of St. Catharine.

The badge of this order is a medal encircled with precious stones surrounding the picture of St. Catharine, with the motto "For Love and Fidelity." This was as a remembrance of her love and faithful-

ness to him always; and especially in the distressed situation of his army at the battle of the Pruth.

All the vessels belonging to the Russians, together with those upon which they had seized, came up the Neva opposite the Senate-house and the fort, amid the roar of cannon; after which the men came ashore, and walked in grand procession to the Senate-house.

When his majesty reached a triumphal arch, all the grandees, senators, and foreign ministers, congratulated him on his victory. The Governor of Moscow, in the name of the country, complimented his majesty on his gallant conduct, and thanked him for his great and distinguished services.

The procession then proceeded to the fort, where the Vice-Czar, (I spare you his name,) seated on a throne, surrounded by the Senate, caused Rear-Admiral Peter (for this was the Czar's naval title) to be brought before him, and received a report from him in writing of the gallant action he had fought; and after the reading of this report, he was declared Vice-Admiral of Russia, which being proclaimed in the assembly, the whole house resounded with "Health to the Vice-Admiral." Peter having returned thanks, immediately went on board, and hoisted the flag of the Vice-Admiral.

After this, his majesty, attended by numbers of the nobility and officers, went to the palace of Prince

Menzikoff, where a grand entertainment was provided. When the dinner was ended, the Czar, who had showed a marked attention to Vice-Admiral Ehrenschild, a Swedish prisoner, addressing the company, said, "Gentlemen, you here see a brave and faithful servant of his master, who has made himself worthy of the highest rewards at his hands, and who shall always have my favor while he is with me, although he has killed me many a brave man. I forgive you," said he, turning to the Swede with a smile, "and you may always depend on my good will."

Ehrenschild, having thanked the Czar, replied, "However honorably I may have acted with regard to my master, I did no more than my duty: I sought death, but did not meet it; and it is no small comfort to me in my misfortune, to be a prisoner of your majesty, and to be treated so favorably, and with so much distinction by so great a sea-officer, and now, worthily, Vice-Admiral."

The Czar, on this occasion, addressed the following speech to the assembled senators, many of whom had not been very favorable to his views of reform, nor to the great expense occasioned by maintaining a fleet:—

"My brethren, where is the man among you, who, twenty years ago, would have conceived the idea of being engaged along with myself in building ships

here on the Baltic, and in settling in these regions, conquered by our fatigues and bravery?—of living to see so many brave and victorious soldiers and seamen, sprung from Russian blood,—and to see our sons returning home accomplished men from foreign countries? Historians place the seat of all sciences in Greece; whence being expelled by the fatality of the times, they spread into Italy, and thence were dispersed all over Europe; but by the perverseness of our ancestors, they stopped short in Poland. The Poles as well as the Germans formerly groped in the same darkness in which we have hitherto lived,—but the indefatigable care of their governors at length opened their eyes, and they made themselves masters of those arts, sciences, and social improvements, which Greece once boasted of. It is now our turn, if you will only seriously second my designs, and add to your obedience voluntary knowledge. I can compare this progress of the sciences to nothing better than the circulation of the blood in the human body; and my mind almost prophesies that they will some time or other quit their abode in Britain, France, and Germany, to come and settle for some centuries among us; and afterward, perhaps, return to their original home in Greece. In the mean time I earnestly recommend to your practice the Latin saying, *Ora et labora;* and in that case, be persuaded, you

may chance, even in your own lifetime, to put other civilized nations to the blush, and raise the glory of the Russian name to the highest pitch."

The senators and the whole assembly applauded this speech. A round of entertainments were now given by the superior officers of the government; from all which the Czarovitz, Alexis, thought fit to absent himself, though regularly invited by General Bruce, "who," says Captain Bruce, "sent me several times to inform him of his majesty's displeasure at his non-appearance; but the old excuse—want of health—served on every occasion."

It seems that this wayward young man, to avoid appearing in public, either took medicine or bled himself,—always making an excuse that his want of health would not allow him to attend; "when, at the same time," says Bruce, "it was notoriously known that he spent his time in very bad company, where he used constantly to condemn all his father's actions."

On the present occasion, by way of punishment, the Czar ordered him, being only a sergeant of grenadiers, to take his place on the right, with his halbert on his shoulder, when a company of that regiment was ordered to attend one of these entertainments. The princess, his consort, happening to see him from a window march past, as she thought in a degrading situation, was taken ill and fainted.

The Czar on hearing this, immediately went to her, explained to her that he himself had gone through the lowest ranks of both land and sea service, till he reached what he now was, a general in one, and a vice-admiral in the other; but he told her, with his usual good-nature, that he had just procured for his son, from the Vice-Czar, an ensign's commission in the guards, and that he came to give her joy on her husband's promotion.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Royal prisoners in Turkey—Return of Charles—Siege of Stralsund—Anecdote of Charles—Success of the Czar—Entertainments at the Court of Russia—New travels of the Czar—High price of eggs—Reception at Amsterdam.

Two Christian kings were now prisoners in Turkey. Charles the Twelfth, who having given his promise to the Sultan, that he would leave his dominions, and having received from him a supply of money and a guard for his journey, took the mad resolution to continue there, and oppose the whole army of Turks and Tartars, with only his own domestics.

And Stanislaus, the former king of Poland, who having just arrived in Turkey on a visit to King Charles, at the very time he came to this resolution, was also seized and detained as a prisoner. Charles, however, though informed that many towns belonging to him, had been taken possession of by other powers, and that he had lost part of the country of Pome-

rania, still had hopes of returning to Poland at the head of a Turkish army, replacing Stanislaus on the throne, and once again making his enemies tremble.

Those who governed affairs in Sweden, having become discouraged, and desperate, determined not to consult their absent king any longer as to their movements, but to send to the Czar an officer with proposals of peace. Just as this ambassador was setting out, however, they heard that Charles Twelfth was on his way home to fight his own battles; and in fact the King of Sweden, after remaining five years and some months in Turkey, set out from that kingdom in October 1714.

Charles supposed that he could at once raise a sufficient number of vessels to put a stop to the rising power of the Czar on the sea; with respect to the war on land, he had little fear, thinking it an easy matter for the Swedes to conquer the Russians, with himself at their head.

But in the month of April, the first Swedish privateers that put to sea, were captured by the Czar's men-of-war; and a Russian army marched into the heart of Pomerania. Charles Twelfth was now in Stralsund, a town of Pomerania, on the Baltic sea; which town was soon besieged by Prussians, Danes, and Saxons; and Charles found that he had returned

from being a prisoner in Turkey, only to be more closely pent up at home.

Towards the end of the year, Stralsund, after having made a brave resistance, and being reduced to a heap of ruins, surrendered to the King of Prussia. There is an anecdote told of Charles during this siege, which shows a peculiarity of his character. So many of his officers were either killed or wounded, that the duty came very hard upon those who were left.

Baron Reichal, a colonel, having been long fighting upon the ramparts, and being completely worn out with watching and fatigue, had thrown himself upon a bench, to take a little rest. He had no sooner laid down, however, than he was called up again to mount guard upon the ramparts.

As the tired soldier was dragging himself along to obey this order, he indulged himself in speaking in no very mild or measured terms, of the obstinacy of the king his master, in subjecting all those about him to such terrible and useless fatigue; these complimentary remarks were overheard by Charles, who immediately hastened to him, stripped off his own cloak and spread it on the ground before him, saying, "My dear Reichal, you are quite worn out; come, I have had an hour's sleep, which has quite refreshed me; I'll take the guard for you, while you finish your nap, and will wake you when I think it is time."

And so saying, he wrapped the colonel up in his own cloak, and in spite of his resistance he made him lie down and rest, while he mounted guard in his place. Before the place was delivered up to the Russians, Charles, at the risk of his life, escaped in a small boat, with ten persons; his officers having forced him to quit the place.

When his friend Duker, who surrendered the place, joined him, the king reproached him for not holding out longer against the enemy.

"I had your majesty's glory too much at heart," replied Duker, "to continue to defend a place, which your majesty was obliged to leave."

Charles, who was already saddened by this defeat, now received the melancholy tidings of the death of Count Piper, his former minister, and true and faithful friend. This officer had, as you remember, been taken prisoner at the battle of Pultowa, and had remained all these years a prisoner among the Russians. He died in 1715, at the age of seventy, in the Castle of Schlussebourg, where he was confined. His remains were sent to the King of Sweden who gave them a magnificent burial; "a vain and melancholy return," says Voltaire, "to an old servant for a life of suffering, and so deplorable an end."

Peter the Czar of Russia had now conquered all Finland, part of Pomerania, the countries on the east-

ern shores of the Baltic, and the whole of both coasts of the Gulf of Finland. There was nothing, therefore, now to fear from Sweden, and the Czar turned his attention once more to making improvements in his own country.

St. Petersburg now began to assume the consequence as well as the appearance of a great capital; and vast numbers flocked thither from Moscow and other interior towns, seeing that the seat of commerce would eventually be established there. The Czar had now become almost universally popular.

Desirous that in manners as well as in dress his subjects should imitate other European nations, he encouraged frequent social assemblies: he even ordered his senators and his generals to open their houses twice a week for these assemblies, at which conversation, cards, and dancing might be resorted to; they were to commence at eight, and end at eleven o'clock; they were open to all of the rank of gentlemen, foreigners as well as natives, and equally so for their wives and daughters. This was a great step gained in civilization; and the ladies gladly profited by the indulgence, and rapidly improved in their manners, conversation, and dress.

The balls and entertainments of the Czar had hitherto always been given at Prince Menzikoff's palace,—but his own summer and winter palace be-

ing finished in the course of the year 1715, he now entertained his guests at one or the other of these; except on grand festivals, and extraordinary occasions, when the entertainments were held at the senate-house.

At the public dinners, several tables were laid out, appropriated to the several classes of persons, as senators, clergymen, officers of the army and navy, merchants, shipbuilders, and others; the Czarina and the ladies at a separate table, and generally above stairs. These entertainments commonly ended with hard drinking.

After dinner the Czar used to go from one room and table to another, conversing with every set according to their different professions or employments, more particularly with the masters of foreign trading vessels, making minute inquiries into the several branches of their traffic, and marking down in his pocket-book, as usual, whatever occurred to him as worthy of notice. "At these dinners," says Bruce, "I have seen the Dutch skippers treat him with much familiarity, calling him *Skipper Peter*, with which he seemed to be highly delighted."

The accounts given of these entertainments of the Czar, are so disgusting, that I cannot give them to you in full, but will content myself with a few extracts.

"There are," says Dr. Birch, "twenty-four cooks belonging to the kitchen of the Russian court, who are all Russians. And as the people of that nation use a great deal of onion, garlic, and train-oil, in dressing their meat, and employ linseed, and walnut oil, for their provisions, the kitchen is so disagreeable a place that no stranger is able to bear it.

"The number of persons invited to an entertainment is commonly two or three hundred, though there is no room for more than a hundred at four or five tables. But as there is no place assigned to any person, and none of the Russians are willing to go home without partaking of the dinner, every one is obliged to seize his chair and hold it by force, if he would not have it snatched from him.

"The Czar having come in, and chosen a place for himself, there is such a scuffling and fighting for chairs, that nothing more scandalous can be seen in any country. Several foreign ministers have complained of this to the Czar, and refused to dine any more at court."

And if the dishes were such as are afterwards described, I should think they would be glad of an excuse for refusing to attend.

"But all the answer they received," says Dr. Birch, "was, that it was not the Czar's business to turn master of ceremonies, and please foreigners,

neither did he intend to abolish the freedom once introduced. This obliged strangers to follow the Russian fashion, and fight like the rest for their seats.

"The company thus sitting down to table, without any manner of grace, they all sit so crowded together that they have much ado to lift their hands to their mouths. And if a stranger sits between two Russians, which is commonly the case, he is sure to lose his appetite, even though he had eaten nothing for two days before."

There was also a great deal of hard drinking at these feasts, and the company soon became so noisy as to drown the din of trumpets, and other instruments of music, which were playing in the next room.

But though this is not the worst, it is enough to show the barbarism of the manners in the time of Peter the Great. When alone with the Empress it is said the Czar was moderate in his eating and drinking. His table was frugal, and consisted only of plain dishes, and in the latter part of his life, he became simple and regular in all his habits.

Peace and prosperity being finally established in Russia, Peter determined to gratify himself with another tour through Europe, taking Catharine with him. After visiting many places in Denmark and

Prussia he came to Amsterdam, where he was received with every mark of respect and attention.

At one time on his route he left Catharine at some place, and proceeded alone to meet the King of Prussia. On his return he stopped at night at a tavern, with only two attendants and a post-chaise. Having eaten some poached eggs and a little bread and cheese, he retired to rest, while his companions ordered a bottle of wine.

When they were about starting at an early hour in the morning, one of the gentlemen asked the landlord how much they were to pay?

"One hundred ducats," answered the landlord.

"What?" cried the astonished Russian.

"One hundred ducats," repeated the host; "for my part I should be glad to give a thousand, if I were the Czar of Russia."

Peter turning round, asked the man "if eggs were so very scarce in that place?"

"No," answered the host, "but Emperors are."

At Amsterdam he was met by the Earl of Albemarle, and three of the Burgomasters; and the earl addressed him in a pompous, flowery speech, in the Dutch language. Peter, who, as you know, had a great dislike to all ceremony, replied:—

"I thank you heartily, though I don't understand much of what you say. I learned my Dutch among

shipbuilders; but the sort of language you have spoken I am sure I never learned."

Being invited to dine with some merchants and shipbuilders, they addressed him as "Your Majesty;" and in their conversation paid him other marks of respect.

But Peter cut short their discourse, saying:—

"Come, brothers, let us converse like plain, honest shipcarpenters."

A servant was pouring out a glass of beer for him.

"Give me the can," satd Peter, laughing; "I can then drink as much as I please, and nobody can tell how much."

In this way he put his old friends completely at their ease.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Peter's reception at Zaandam—His visit to the hut where he once resided—Relics exhibited there—Peter's emotion on revisiting this place—His visit to the shipbuilder's house—Anecdote of his son—The Czar's visit to France—Death of the wife of Alexis—Birth of a Prince.

It was nineteen years since Peter had worked in the dock-yard of Zaandam, but on returning there, he found many of his old fellow-laborers, who welcomed him with delight, almost amounting to idolatry. It was no sooner known that his yacht was arrived, than the whole quay was crowded, and "Welcome, welcome Peter Baas!" resounded from a thousand mouths.

An old woman rushed forward to greet him as he stepped on shore.

"My good lady," said the Czar, "how do you know who I am?"

"By your majesty having been so often at my house and table nineteen years ago," answered the old woman. "I am the wife of Baas Pool."

Peter immediately recognized her; embraced and kissed her on the forehead, and invited himself to dine with her that very day.

Indeed, in his whole manner he was the same as when he worked in the dock-yard of Zaandam nineteen years before; the only change observable was that he was now able to endure a crowd, and did not shrink from being stared at.

One of the first places he visited was the little cottage where he had lived, while learning the art of shipbuilding. He found it kept in neat order, and dignified with the name of the "Prince's house." This little cottage is still carefully preserved.

It is surrounded by a neat building, with large arched windows, which was built in the year 1823, by the Princess of Orange, sister to the Emperor Alexander, who purchased it in order to preserve it.

In the first room may still be seen the little oak table and three chairs, which were the only furniture of the room when Peter occupied it. Over the chimney-piece is inscribed,

PETRO MAGNO
ALEXANDER,

And in the Russian and Dutch,

"*To a great man nothing is little.*"

The ladder to the loft still remains, and in the

second little room are some models, and several of Peter's working tools. Thousands of names are scribbled over this once humble abode of Peter the Great.

Peter was much affected on entering this cottage, and mounting the ladder to the loft, he went into a small closet where he had been accustomed to perform his devotions, and remained there alone half an hour.

With his old acquaintance Kist, the blacksmith, he visited the shop where he worked, which was so dirty that the gentleman who attended him was for retreating; but Peter called him back, and ordered him to blow the bellows, while he heated a large piece of iron, which, when heated, he beat out with the great hammer.

Kist was still only a journeyman blacksmith, and the Czar, out of compassion for his old acquaintance, made him a handsome present.

Catharine was very anxious to see this little cabin, in which her husband had lived and worked; and she and Peter went together to Zaandam, where they dined at the house of a rich shipbuilder of the name of Kalf; who was one of the first persons who had traded at St. Petersburg.

This man had a son who had lately returned from France, and the Czar and Czarina took great pleasure

in hearing an anecdote of him, which I will tell you in the words of Voltaire.

"Old Kalf, who had sent this son of his to Paris, to learn the French tongue, was desirous that he should live in a genteel manner during his stay there; and accordingly had ordered him to lay aside the plain garb which the inhabitants of Zaandam are in general accustomed to wear, to provide himself with fashionable clothes in Paris, and to live in a manner, rather suitable to his fortune than to his education; being sufficiently well acquainted with his son's disposition, to know that this indulgence would have no bad effect on his natural frugality and sobriety.

"As a *Calf*, is in the French language called *Veau*, our young traveller when he arrived at Paris, took the name of De Veau. He lived in a splendid manner, spent his money freely, and made several genteel acquintances.

"Nothing is more common in Paris, than to bestow without reserve the title of Count, and Marquis, whether a person has any claim to it or not, or even if he is barely a gentleman.

"Young Mr. Kalf, therefore, was always called the Count de Veau, by his acquaintance and his own servants; he frequently made one in the parties of the princesses; he played at the Duchess of Berri's, and few strangers were treated with greater marks of

distinction, or had more general invitations among polite company.

"A young nobleman who had been always one of his companions in these parties, promised to pay him a visit at Zaandam, and was as good as his word. When he arrived at the village, he inquired for the house of "Count Kalf;" when being shown into a carpenter's workshop, he there saw his former gay companion, dressed in a jacket and trowsers, after the Dutch fashion, with an axe in his hand, at the head of his father's workmen. Here he was received by his friend, in that plain manner to which he had been accustomed from his birth, and from which he never deviated."

In 1715, the Czar was much delighted at the tidings of the birth of a grandson; but his joy was soon damped by hearing of the extreme illness of the mother, the unhappy young wife of the Prince Alexis. The little grandson was called Peter Alexowitz, (or Peter the son of Alexis,) and on the death of Catharine, he became Peter the Second of Russia.

The Czar was busily employed upon his works at Schlusselburg when he heard of the extreme illness of his daughter-in-law; but he left all, and set out immediately for his capital, where he was seized with a sudden illness which confined him to his room; but hearing of her alarming state, he ordered his attend-

ants to place him in a chair moving on wheels, and convey him to her bedside.

The life of the poor young princess had been so unhappy since her marriage, that she seemed to hail death as a happy release. She refused all nourishment and medecine, and begged her physicians not to force it upon her, as she had no other wish than to die in quiet.

By her extreme gentleness of manner, and sweetness of temper, she had endeared herself to all who knew her, and the Czar and Czarina, were greatly grieved at her loss. The interview between the dying princess and the Czar was most affecting. As she took leave of him and recommended her children and servants to his care, the stern hero burst into tears, and assured her that every wish of hers should be accomplished. At midnight this amiable princess died.

The grief of the court for the princess was soon converted into joy; for the day after her funeral, Catharine gave birth to a son, who was also named Peter, with the addition of "Petrowitz," or the son of Peter. On this joyous occasion, there was for ten days a series of entertainments, balls, fireworks, and rejoicings of every kind.

At one of these entertainments a monstrous pie graced the centre of the gentlemen's table, out of

which when it was opened, stepped forth a well-shaped female dwarf; who, having made a speech to the company and drank their healths in a glass of wine, was lifted off from the table.

On the ladies' table, a male dwarf was served up in the same manner. There was also a third pie, out of which when it was opened there flew twelve live partridges; so that you see the story of Mother Goose, of the "four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie," is not so unlikely as you may have thought. These birds and dwarfs were probably not *baked* in the pie, however, but placed there after it was baked, and the cover placed over them.

During this festival the principal inhabitants of St. Petersburg kept open house, their tables spread with cold meat and strong liquors, so that there was scarcely a sober person to be found in the whole city.

On the tenth day the Czar gave a grand entertainment at the senate-house, at the conclusion of which, each guest was required to drink off a large glass called the "double eagle," containing a full bottle of wine.

"To avoid this," says Captain Bruce, "I made my escape, pretending to the officer on guard that I was going on a message from the Czar, which he believing, let me pass. I went to the house of Mr.

Kelderman, who had formerly been one of the Czar's tutors, and was still in very great favor with him.

"Mr. Kelderman followed me very soon, but not before he had drank off his 'double eagle,' and coming into his own house, he complained that he was sick with drinking; and sitting down by the table, laid his head on it, appearing as if fallen asleep.

"This being a common custom with him, his wife and daughters took no notice of it; till after some time, observing him neither to move nor breathe, and coming close up to him, we found he was dead, which threw the family into great confusion.

"Knowing the esteem in which he stood with the Czar, I went and informed him of the sudden death of Mr. Kelderman. His Majesty's concern at the event brought him immediately to the house, where he condoled with the widow for the loss of her husband, ordered an honorable burial of the deceased at his own expense, and settled on her an annuity for life."

CHAPTER XIX.

The conduct of the unhappy son of Peter the Great—The promise of the young Prince to his father—His flight to the court of Charles Sixth—Takes refuge in Naples—Is persuaded to return to Russia—The Czar's declaration—The act of renunciation—The trial of Alexis.

We come now to the story of Alexis, the unfortunate son of Peter the Great. Eudocia, the wife whom the Czar married when he was seventeen years of age, had never sympathized with him in his efforts to reform and civilize his countrymen. She was fond of the old order of things, and much opposed to change; and in every thing she encouraged those who opposed the Czar in his plans for improvement.

At length, by order of her husband she was shut up in the Convent of Susdal, where she was obliged to take the veil under the name of Helena. Her son, who inherited his mother's disposition in all things, was early educated in all her views, and grew up with all her prejudices.

He soon joined himself to the party which con-

demned all that his father had done; and the priests of this party represented to him, that at his father's death, which owing to his frequent illnesses could not be far distant, he might abolish all this new order of things, and revive the ancient customs and manners.

His associates were of the lowest and vilest, and he gave himself up to indulgence in vice, and delighted in those rough and boorish manners which were practised by the party opposed to the Czar. I have told you how his young wife died, neglected, insulted, deprived of all comforts, and wanting even the necessaries of life.

After her death Peter wrote a letter to his son, which closed with the following words:

"I will still wait a little time, to see if you will correct yourself; if not, know that I will cut you off from the succession as we lop off a useless member. Don't imagine that I mean only to frighten you; don't rely upon the title of being my only son; for if I spare not my own life for the good of my people, and for my country, how shall I spare you? I will rather choose to leave my kingdom to a foreigner who deserves it, than to my own son who makes himself unworthy of it."

In Russia, the Emperor had the right of disinheriting his son, and appointing any one he chose as his successor; and Alexis hearing about this time

that Catharine was the mother of a son, seemed to lose courage, and wrote to his father, that he renounced the crown, and all hope of reigning over Russia.

"I take God to witness," says he, "that I never will pretend to the succession; I put my children into your hands, and I desire only a provision for life."

I have before me a translation of the letters of the Czar to his son, and also of the replies of Alexis. I wish that the limits of this little work would allow of my inserting them entire, but they are very long, and would take up too much room. I cannot refrain, however, from giving one extract from the second letter of the Czar.

"You speak of the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent in the disposal thereof. I reproached you with the aversion you have shown to all kinds of business, and signified to you that I was highly dissatisfied with your conduct in general; but to these particulars you have given me no answer.

"Parental exhortations make no impression on you, wherefore I resolve to write you this once for the last time. If you despise the advices I give you while I am alive, what regard will you pay to them after my death? But though you had the inclination

at present to be true to your promises, yet a corrupt priesthood will be able to turn you at pleasure, and force you to falsify them.

"They have no dependence but upon you. You have no sense of gratitude towards him who gave you your being. Have you ever assisted him in toils and labors since you arrived at the age of maturity? Do you not censure and condemn, nay, even affect to hold in detestation, whatever I do for the good of my people?

"In a word, I have reason to conclude that if you survive me you will overturn every thing that I have done. Take your choice; either endeavor to make yourself worthy of the throne, or embrace a monastic life. I expect your answer, either in writing, or by word of mouth, otherwise I shall treat you as a common malefactor."

To this letter Alexis replied, asking permission to enter a monastery and become a monk. This was before the second visit of the Czar to Germany and France, and he immediately went to pay his son a visit. Alexis, who was, or pretended to be sick, received his father in bed, and assured him with solemn oaths, that it was his earnest desire to enter a monastery.

The Czar gave him six months to consider on the subject, and then set out on his travels. He had

hardly arrived in Copenhagen, however, when he heard that his son was again surrounded by evil-minded and discontented people, whose only object was to excite his feelings against his father.

On hearing this, the Czar wrote to Alexis that he had only to choose between a throne and a convent, and that if he had any thoughts of succeeding to the Empire of Russia, he must at once set out and join him at Copenhagen. But now the advisers of Alexis represented to him that it would be a most unsafe thing to place himself in the hands of a father who was already angry at him, and a step-mother whose object it would be to excite his father still more against him.

Alexis yielding to their advice, pretended that he was making preparations to join the Czar, and under this pretence succeeded in obtaining a large sum of money from Menzikoff; but to the surprise of all, excepting those who were in his secret, instead of taking the road to Copenhagen, he took that which led to Vienna, and there threw himself under the protection of his brother-in-law, Charles Sixth, intending to remain at his court till after the death of his father.

Charles, however, not thinking it prudent to give offence to the Czar of Russia, gave Alexis such a reception, that not finding himself very welcome, he soon removed to Naples. As soon as Peter heard

that his son was there, he despatched Romanzoff, a captain of his guards, and Tolstoy, his privy-counsellor, with the following letter to him written with his own hand.

"I now write to you for the last time, to acquaint you that you must instantly comply with my orders, which will be communicated to you by Tolstoy and Romanzoff.

"If you obey, I give you my sacred word and promise, that I will not punish you; and that, if you will return home, I will love you more than ever. But, if you do not, I, as your father, and in virtue of the authority which God has given me over you, denounce against you my eternal curse; and as your sovereign, declare to you that I will find means to punish your disobedience, in which I trust God himself will assist me, and espouse the just cause of an injured parent and king.

"For the rest, remember that I have never laid any restraint upon you. Was I obliged to leave you at liberty to choose your way of life? Had I not the power in my own hands to oblige you to conform to my will? I had only to command and make myself obeyed."

Persuasions, promises, and threats, were employed for a long time by the two envoys of the Czar, before they could induce Alexis to return with them to

Russia. But at length, on their often repeating to him his father's promise, that he would not only pardon him but would love him better than ever, the prince consented to accompany them.

They arrived at Moscow in February, 1718, and on the same day, Alexis had a long interview with his father, who had just returned from his travels. They were closeted together for a long time, and a report spread through the city that the Czar and his son were reconciled, and all the past was to be forgotten.

What really passed between them is not known, but the next day orders were issued for the regiments of guards to be under arms at break of day, and for all the Czar's ministers, boyards, and councillors, to repair to the great hall of the castle. The priests also, and the monks of St. Basile, were to assemble in the Cathedral at the tolling of the great bell.

The unhappy Prince was then conducted to the great castle, and when brought into the presence of his father, he threw himself in tears at his feet, and presented in writing a confession of his faults, declaring himself unworthy of the throne, and imploring only that his life might be spared.

The Czar raised him up and led him into a private room, where he put many questions to him, declaring that if he concealed any thing relating to his elope-

ment, his life should answer for it. When this interview was ended, the Prince was brought back to the great hall, where the Czar's declaration, which had before been prepared, was publicly read in his presence.

This declaration is very long, and would take up many pages of a book like this. By the Czar's order, it was to be published throughout the kingdom, that all might know his determination with regard to his son, and the reasons which had led to it.

In this paper the Czar begins at the beginning of the story, and relates the conduct of his son, and his efforts to reform him. His dislike of study, his fondness for low company, his opposition to his father, and his treatment of his wife, are all set forth in this declaration; together with the fact of his having asked the Emperor of Germany to defend him by force of arms against his father.

The declaration closes with these words:

"In this manner has our son returned; and although, by his withdrawing himself and raising calumnies against us, he has deserved to be punished with death, yet out of our paternal affection we pardon his crimes; but considering his unworthiness, and the series of his irregular conduct, we cannot in conscience leave him the succession to the throne of Russia; foreseeing that by his vicious courses, he would, after

our decease, entirely destroy the glory of our nation, and the safety of our dominions, which we have recovered from the enemy.

"Now, as we should pity our states, and our faithful subjects, if, by such a successor, we should throw them back into a much worse condition than ever they were yet; so, by the paternal authority, and, in quality of sovereign prince, in consideration of the safety of our dominions, we do deprive our said son Alexis, for his crimes and unworthiness, of the succession after us to our throne of Russia, even though there should not remain one single person of our family after us.

"And we do constitute and declare, successor to the said throne after us, our second son, Peter,* though yet very young, having no successor that is older.

"We lay upon our said son Alexis, our paternal curse, if ever at any time he pretends to, or reclaims, the said succession.

"And we desire our faithful subjects, whether ecclesiastics, or seculars, of all ranks and conditions, and the whole Rusian nation, in conformity to this constitution and our will, to acknowledge and consider our son Peter, appointed by us to succeed, as

* This was the son of the Empress Catharine, who died April 15th, 1719.

lawful successor, and agreeably to this our constitution, to confirm the whole by oath, before the holy altar, upon the holy gospel, kissing the cross.

"And all those who shall ever at any time oppose this our will, and who from this day forward, shall dare to consider our son Alexis as successor, or assist him for that purpose, declare them traitors to us and our country. And we have ordered that these presents shall be every where published and promulgated, to the end that no person may pretend ignorance."

After this, was read the "Act of Renunciation," by which Alexis publicly gave up all right to the throne of Russia, in these words:

"I, the undersigned, declare before the holy Evangelists, that I acknowledge and avow this exclusion to be just, as having deserved it by my crimes and unworthiness; and I bind myself, and swear in the name of the Sacred and Almighty Trinity, to submit myself wholly to this my father's will; never to seek after this succession, never to lay claim to it, never to accept it under any pretence whatever; and I acknowledge as lawful successor my brother Peter; on which I kiss the holy cross, and sign these presents with my own hand.—Alexis."

To the tolling of the solemn bell the long procession then moved to the cathedral, where, in the pres-

ence of the whole body of clergy, these papers were a second time read.

We can find no excuse for the Czar in thus breaking the solemn promise and oath given to his son, that if he would return to Russia he would forgive him, and love him better than ever. There are those who apologize for him by saying, that the Czar intended to say that he would grant him his love and forgiveness on condition that he would remain shut up in a monastery for the rest of his days.

Whether the Czar actually intended to fulfil the promise made, and there were circumstances after the return of Alexis which altered his determination, we do not know, neither can we tell what occurred during those long secret conferences between the Czar and his son, immediately after his return.

There were numerous questions put to Alexis, in writing, in his answers to which he seems determined to make himself appear as guilty as possible, making admissions, and stating circumstances, which he might as well have kept secret, and even by telling falsehoods endeavoring to make his guilt appear stronger.

Though pretending to give up to his father the names of those who had assisted him in his flight, and encouraged him in his disobedience, he concealed several of them, and in his pretended confessions at one time, he contradicted those made at another.

When the Czar, therefore, came to the conclusion to have his son formally tried by the great officers of state, the judges and the bishops, it is supposed that he yielded to a painful necessity, requiring the sacrifice of one person, rather than that the whole empire should be endangered; and that the Czar for the time crushed his feelings as a father, for the good of the country whose welfare he had so much at heart.

The crimes of Alexis had been such that by the laws of Russia, the Czar had the right to punish him with death; and yet he preferred to submit the case to the judges of the land, the nobles, and the clergy. In his address to the court appointed to try his son the Czar thus explains himself:

"Though, according to all laws civil and divine, and especially those of this empire, which grant an absolute jurisdiction to fathers over their children, (even fathers in private life,) we have a full and unlimited power to judge our son for his crimes, according to our pleasure, without asking the advice of any person whatsoever.

"Yet as men are more liable to prejudice and partiality in their own affairs, than in those of others, and as the most eminent and expert physicians rely not on their own judgment concerning themselves, but call in the advice and assistance of others; so we,

under the fear of God, and an awful dread of offending him, in like manner make known our disease, and apply to you for a cure; being apprehensive of eternal death if, ignorant perhaps of the nature of our distemper we should attempt to cure ourselves; and the rather as in a solemn appeal to Almighty God, I have signed, sworn, and confirmed a promise of pardon to my son, in case he should declare to me the truth.

"And though he has violated this promise, by concealing the most important circumstances of his rebellious design against us; yet, that we may not in any thing swerve from our obligations, we pray you to consider this affair with seriousness and attention, and report what punishment he deserves, without favor or partiality either to him or me; for should you apprehend that he deserves but a slight punishment, it will be disagreeable to me. I swear to you by the great God and his judgments, that you have nothing to fear on this head.

"Neither let the reflection that you are about to pass sentence on the son of your prince, have any influence on you, but administer justice without respect of persons, and destroy not your own souls and mine also, by doing any thing to injure our country, or upbraid our consciences, in the great and terrible day of judgment."

CHAPTER XX.

Opinion of the Clergy—Last examination of Prince Alexis—His Condemnation—Reports as to Catharine's influence in the matter—Testimony of others on the subject—Death of Alexis—Opinions of some persons, as to the Manner of his Death—The Czar turns his attention once more to Internal Improvements.

On the first of July the clergy, whose advice had been asked by the Czar, sent in their opinion in writing, in which a beautiful contrast between the mercy of Jesus Christ and the severity of the Jewish law, is presented to the father and sovereign about to pronounce sentence upon his son and subject.

After stating that this affair does not properly fall within their control, the Emperor of Russia having full right to act as seems best to himself in the case, they proceed to bring forward texts from Scripture, particularly from Leviticus, such as "Cursed be he that curseth father and mother," and others of like import, from other parts of the Holy Book; and then conclude in these words:

"If his Majesty is inclined to punish the offender according to his deeds, and the measure of his crimes, he has before him the examples in the Old Testament; if, on the other hand, he is inclined to show mercy, he has a pattern in our Lord Jesus Christ, who receives the prodigal son, when returning with a contrite heart, and who prefers mercy to burnt offerings.

"He has likewise the example of David, who spared his son Absalom, who had rebelled against and persecuted him, saying to his captains when going forth to the fight, 'Spare my son Absalom!' The father was here inclined to mercy, but Divine justice suffered not the offender to go unpunished.

"The heart of the Czar is in the hands of God; let him take that side to which it shall please the Almighty to direct him."

On the same day that this opinion was presented to the Czar in writing, his unhappy son was again and for the last time examined, and signed his final confession, wherein he acknowledges himself to have been "a bigot in his youthful days, to have frequented the company of priests and monks, to have drank with them, and to have imbibed from their conversations the first impressions of dislike to the duties of his station and even to the person of his father."

On the 6th of July, 1718, the Prince Alexis was unanimously condemned to death, by one hundred and

forty-four judges, not one of whom hinted at a milder punishment. And the Czar was so well satisfied of the justice of this sentence, that he submitted it to the judgment of every other nation, by causing the whole proceedings to be printed and translated into many different languages.

"All Europe," says Voltaire, "was divided in its sentiments, whether most to pity a young prince, prosecuted by his own father, and condemned to lose his life, by those who were one day to have been his subjects; or the father, who thought himself under a necessity to sacrifice his own son to the welfare of his nation."

It was said by some foreign writers, that Catharine, who was hated by the young Prince, and whom he had publicly threatened with terrible vengeance whenever he should ascend the throne, had used her wonderful influence over the Czar, to persuade him to bring his son to trial, and to condemn him to death.

Many other absurd stories were added to this, of the treatment of Alexis by his father, and of Catharine by the Czar, which are all contradicted by the foreign ministers who were at that time resident at the Court of Russia.

Voltaire says, "I have now before me the memoirs of a public minister, in which I find the follow-

ing words: 'I was present when the Czar told the Duke of Holstein, that the Czarina Catharine had begged of him to prevent the sentence passed upon Alexis being publicly read to that Prince.

"'Content yourself,' said she, 'with obliging him to turn monk; for this public and formal condemnation of your son will reflect an odium on your grandson.'

"The Czar, however, would not listen to this advice of Catharine, but ordered the sentence to be publicly read to his son. When these awful words were read to the young Prince: 'The laws divine and ecclesiastical, civil and military, condemn to death without mercy, those whose attempts against their father, and their sovereign, have been fully proved,' he fell into a fit, which turned to apoplexy, and it was with great difficulty that he was recovered at that time.

"Afterwards, when he came a little to himself, and in the dreadful interval between life and death, he sent to beg that his father would come to him. The Czar immediately complied with this request, and when they met, both father and son burst into a flood of tears.

"The unfortunate young man then asked his father's forgiveness, which he gave him publicly; he then received the sacrament, and on the 7th of July,

the day after the sentence of death had been pronounced against him, at six o'clock in the evening, the Prince Alexis died in the presence of the whole Court.

"His body was immediately carried to the cathedral, where it lay in state, exposed to public view for four days, after which it was interred in the church of the citadel, by the side of his late princess; the Czar and Czarina attending at the funeral.

There are many stories told by writers of that time, who would render the memory of Peter the Great odious, which seem very improbable, and certainly are very contradictory. By some it is said that the Czar beheaded his son with his own hand, and afterwards caused the head to be sewed on again. While others declare that the young Prince was despatched by poison given to him by his father."

Voltaire asks, "How was it possible that the Czar could have beheaded his son with his own hand, when extreme unction was administered to the latter in the presence of the whole court? Was he dead, when the sacred oil was poured upon his head? When, or how could this dissevered head have been rejoined to its trunk? It is well known, that the prince was not left alone a single moment, from the reading of his sentence to him, to the instant of his death.

"Besides, this story of the Czar's having had recourse to the sword, acquits him at least of having made use of poison. I will allow," he adds, "that it is somewhat uncommon, that a young man in the vigor of his days, should die of a sudden fright, occasioned by hearing the sentence of his own death read to him, and especially when it was a sentence that he expected; but, after all, physcians will tell us that it is a thing not impossible."

Besides, after sentence of death had been publicly pronounced upon Alexis by one hundred and forty-four judges, why should the Czar poison him privately, and thus suffer his memory to be stained with the murder of his son, when he could easily have supported the character of an upright though severe judge?

"Such, then," says Voltaire, "was the dear and fatal price at which Peter the Great purchased the happiness of his people, and such are some of the many difficulties he had to overcome, in the midst of a long and dangerous war with other nations, and an unnatural rebellion at home.

"He saw one half of his family plotting against him, the greater number of the priesthood obstinately bent on overturning his designs, and almost the whole nation opposing its own happiness and prosperity. There were prejudices to overcome, discontents to allay;

in a word, there was created a new generation formed by his care, to entertain the proper ideas of happiness and glory, which their fathers were not able to bear."

If we look upon Peter the Great throughout this sad affair, as having acted only as the father of his country, we realize what an immense sacrifice he made of his own private feelings for the sake of the great family whose welfare he had so much at heart.

The fears of the Czar, as to rebellion among his own subjects, and his anxieties lest his efforts for the improvement of his nation should all be overthrown, now being for the time at rest, he turned his attention once more towards the introduction of manufactures, and public works of every kind; opened new branches of trade, and constructed canals which joined rivers, and seas, and people, which nature had separated from each other.

A regular police was established, schools and hospitals sprang up in many cities of the empire, the swarms of beggars were cleared from the great cities, and these wretched creatures who had lived only upon the charity of others, were set to work for their living.

The City of St. Petersburg was well lighted with lamps at night, the streets were nicely paved, pumps were placed at different points for supplying water in

case of fire, and every thing was contrived by the Czar for the safety of the lives and property of his subjects.

Peter in person superintended the iron and steel manufactures, corn mills, powder mills, mills for sawing timber, manufactories for cordage and sail cloths, and gave directions to brick-makers, slaters and cloth-weavers.

Great numbers of workmen from France came to settle in Russia, and set up their manufactories for making fine looking-glass, looms for working curious tapestry, and the making of gold and silver thread.

Woollen manufactures and silk manufactures flourished, and as fine linen was soon made in Moscow as in Holland. Iron mines were worked most vigorously, and mines of gold and silver were discovered.

For the success of all these works, and many more of which I have not spoken, it was necessary that their great founder should at times be present to inspect operations, and give directions himself; and even that he should work at them with his own hands, as he had done years before, at the building, rigging and sailing of ships.

When canals were to be dug in marshy and difficult places, and the workmen were almost ready to give out discouraged, then often was the Czar to be

seen at the head of the workmen, digging the ground, and carrying it away himself.

In Voltaire's time the tools were preserved and shown which Peter used in digging and levelling the earth for these canals, and it may be they are still to be exhibited to the curious traveller in Russia.

He encouraged trade, made new and good laws, and insisted upon their being put in force, improved the clergy, and reformed the customs of the Russian church.

Every where Peter was busy, laboring for the good of his people. Nothing was too great for him to undertake; nothing that tended to their improvement too little for him to give it a helping hand.

CHAPTER XXI.

The War with Sweden draws to a close—Plans proposed for the Reconciliation of the two great Monarchs—The designs of Charles Twelfth upon Norway—His Power of Endurance—A random Shot and its Consequences—Peace proclaimed—Peter receives the title of "Emperor and Father of his Country"—Expedition against Persia—Coronation of Catharine—Story of Moens and his Sister.

These great enterprises, this minute review of the whole Russian empire, and the melancholy proceedings against his unhappy son, were not the only objects which called for the attention of the Czar of Russia. There was still a war going on with Sweden, though not very vigorously just now; still, it was necessary that Peter should give his attention to the security of his kingdom from foes without, as well as settling order and tranquillity at home.

But now this long continued war was drawing to a close. A plan had been formed by the prime minister and chief adviser of Charles Twelfth, to reconcile the two great contending monarchs, who

were, according to this plan, to unite together, and crush the other powers of Europe.

Some steps had already been taken towards this end. There had been an exchange of officers of rank, who had been long detained in the two countries as prisoners of war, and just as this great plan was about to be perfected, a random shot from the works of Fredericstadt, in Norway, crushed all these projects, and changed the whole face of affairs.

Charles Twelfth, who had turned his attention towards Norway, was determined to make himself master of that kingdom, and then to advance upon England. In the month of December, 1718, he laid siege to Fredericstadt, a place of great strength and importance, and considered as the key of the kingdom of Norway.

The cold was intense. The soldiers were so benumbed that it was almost impossible for them to break the ground, which was so hardened by frost that it was like piercing into the solid rock. But nothing could resist the perseverance of the Swedes, when they saw their king at their head, sharing in all their labors, their fatigues and sufferings.

The constitution of Charles, strengthened by eighteen years of severe labor, was hardened to such a degree that he slept in the open field in Norway,

with only a cloak thrown over him, while many of the soldiers on duty dropped dead with the cold.

One evening Charles went out to view the trenches, and not finding them so far advanced as he had expected, he expressed his surprise and displeasure.

The French engineer who conducted the siege, assured him that the place would be taken in eight days. "Well, we shall see!" said the king, and went on surveying the works. He stopped at an angle, and kneeling down and resting his elbow on the parapet, he watched the men as they worked by starlight.

Thus nearly half his body was exposed to a battery of cannon, pointed directly against the angle where he stood. Two or three French officers were near him giving orders, when they suddenly saw the king fall over upon the parapet with a deep sigh.

They ran to him but he was already dead. A ball of half a pound had struck him upon the temple, crushing in his skull, and beating out his eyes. At sight of this shocking spectacle one of the French officers, a man of a singular turn of mind, and great indifference of manner, said:

"Come gentlemen, the farce is ended; let us go home to supper!"

The officers who gathered round him agreed that

it would be best for the time, to keep the news of his death from the soldiers. They, therefore wrapped the body in a cloak, put a hat and wig upon the head, and carried Charles Twelfth under the name of one Captain Carlsberg through the midst of the troops, who saw the body of their dead king pass by them, without ever dreaming that it was his majesty.

"Thus," says Voltaire, "fell Charles Twelfth of Sweden at the age of thirty-six years and a half, after having experienced all the grandeur of prosperity, and all the hardships of adversity, without being either softened by the one, or in the least disturbed by the other."

The king was no sooner dead, than the siege was abandoned, and a total change took place in the government. The sister of Charles, Ulrica, was appointed Queen, but she soon gave the sovereign power into the hands of her husband, the prince of Hesse, who became King of Sweden.

In 1720, measures were taken to bring about peace between Russia and Sweden, and on the 10th of November, 1721, a treaty of peace was signed at Nystadt, by which the Czar was to remain in possession of all the countries conquered by his arms, on the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland.

Peter was much rejoiced at this event, as it relieved him from the necessity of keeping such large

armies on the frontiers of Sweden, and left him at liberty to give his whole time to the improvement of his own empire, and to perfecting those arts and sciences which he had introduced among his subjects, at the expense of such great labor and industry.

By this peace, Peter now attained the summit of his glory. Nothing could surpass the joy of the people of Russia, as the news spread from one end of the empire to the other. Prisoners were set free by order of the Emperor, privileges which had been cut off were restored, and toleration was granted to those not of the established religion.

The Senate, after much deliberation with the heads of the Church, came to a resolution that his Majesty, having acquired for the nation so much glory in the eyes of the whole world, should be entreated as a token of acknowledgment on the part of his subjects, and after the example of other sovereigns, to accept and adopt the titles of "Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his Country;" praying him, in the name of all the states in the Russian empire, to permit them to make an offering of these titles for his acceptance, on the day of the celebration of the peace in the great cathedral.

His Majesty, after considerable hesitation, at last consented; and on the day in question, after divine service, the Archbishop of Plescow delivered a

speech, in which he enumerated all the glorious exploits of his Majesty, and the favors he had heaped on the nation, and his subjects during his reign.

Then the Great Chancellor, Count Golofkin, delivered a similar speech, in which, in the name of all the states of the Empire, he humbly entreated the Czar to accept the above-mentioned titles.

Then the whole Senate thrice repeated, "Long live Peter the Great, Emperor of all the Russias, and Father of his Country!" and the assembly testified their applause by the sound of trumpets and kettle-drums, and the roar of cannon from the ramparts, the admiralty, and one hundred and twenty-five galleys, which had arrived the same day, and brought upwards of twenty thousand men, who had been serving in Finland.

In going out of the Cathedral their imperial Majesties were saluted with the acclamations of the people. They proceeded to the hall of the Senate house, where the promotions of several military and naval officers were declared, after which the assembly sat down to table, where more than a thousand persons of both sexes were entertained.

The streets ran with wine, an ox was roasted whole, and stuffed with fowls for the populace, and the night concluded with illuminations and fireworks. The rejoicings continued for fifteen days, during

which were held five or six grand masquerades, in which the whole court bore a part.

But as is the case every where else through life, joy and grief were mingled in the history of Peter the Great, for his little son, who had been declared hereditary prince of Russia, had died at the age of five years, to the great grief of his parents and of the whole nation.

Peter now, on different pretences, but in reality in order to establish trade, by way of the Caspian Sea, went upon an expedition against Persia, on which he was accompanied by Catharine. This expedition, the details of which it is not my intention to give here, proved unsuccessful, and the army of the Czar returned to Russia.

Great preparations were now made for the public coronation of Catharine, which ceremony, entirely new and unusual as it was in the Russian empire, was intended to prepare the minds of the people to acknowledge her as Empress, after the death of the Czar.

On the day of the coronation, Peter walked before Catharine, as Captain of a new company, which he had created, under the name of the "Knights of the Empress."

"When they arrived at the Cathedral," says Voltaire, "Peter himself placed the crown upon her

head; and when she would have fallen down and embraced his knees, he prevented her; and at their return from the church, he caused the sceptre and globe to be carried before her. The ceremony was altogether worthy of an emperor; for on every public occasion Peter showed as much pomp and magnificence, as he did plainness and simplicity in his private manner of living.

"Having thus crowned his wife, he at length determined to give his eldest daughter Anna in marriage to the Duke of Holstein. This princess greatly resembled her father in the face, was very majestic, and of a singular beauty. She was betrothed to the Duke of Holstein on the 24th of November, 1724, but with very little ceremony.

"Peter had for some time past found his health greatly impaired, and this (together with some family uneasiness, that perhaps rather increased his disorder, which in a short time proved fatal,) permitted him to have but very little relish for feasts, or public diversions, in this latter part of his life.

"The Empress Catharine had at that time a young man for the chamberlain of her household, whose name was Moens de la Croix, a native of Russia, but of Flemish parents, remarkably handsome and genteel. His sister, Madame de Balc, was lady of



PETER CROWNING CATHERINE.

the bedchamber to the Empress, and these two had entirely the management of her household.

"Being both accused of having taken presents, they were sent to prison, and afterwards brought to their trial, by express order of the Czar; who, by an edict in the year 1714, had forbidden any one holding a place about court, to receive any present or other gratuity, on pain of being declared infamous, and suffering death; and this prohibition was several times renewed.

"The brother and sister were found guilty, and received sentence; and all those who had either purchased their services, or given them any present in return for the same, were included therein, except the Duke of Holstein, and his minister; as it is probable that the presents made by that prince to those who had a share in bringing about his marriage with the Czar's daughter, were not looked upon in a criminal light.

"Moens was condemned to be beheaded, and his sister, (who was the Empress's favorite,) to receive eleven strokes of the knout. The two sons of this lady, one of whom was an officer in the household, and the other a page, were degraded, and sent to serve as private soldiers in the army in Persia.

"These severities, though they shock our notions, were perhaps necessary in a country where the ob-

servance of the laws is to be enforced only by the most terrifying rigor. The Empress solicited her favorite's pardon; but the Czar, offended at her application, peremptorily refused her, and in the heat of his passion, seeing a fine looking-glass in the apartment, he, with one blow of his fist, broke it into a thousand pieces.

"Turning to the Empress, 'Thus,' said he, 'thou seest I can, with one stroke of my hand, reduce this glass to its original dust.'

"Catharine in a melting accent replied: 'It is true you have destroyed one of the greatest ornaments of your palace, but do you think that palace is the more charming for its loss?'

"This answer appeased the Emperor's wrath, but all the favor that Catharine could obtain for the woman of her bedchamber was, that she should receive only five strokes of the knout instead of eleven.

"I should not have related this anecdote," continues Voltaire, "had it not been attested by a public minister, who was eye-witness of the whole transaction, and who, by having made presents to the unfortunate brother and sister, was perhaps himself one of the principal causes of their disgrace and suffering.

"It was this affair which emboldened those who judge of every thing in the worst light, to spread the

report that Catharine hastened the death of her husband, whose hasty temper filled her with fears, which overbalanced the gratitude she owed him for the many favors he had heaped upon her.

"These cruel suspicions were confirmed by Catharine's recalling to court her woman of the bed-chamber, immediately upon the death of the Czar, and giving her her former place and influence.

"It is the duty of an historian," adds Voltaire, "to relate the public reports which have been in all times spread, on the decease of princes, who have been snatched away by sudden death, as if nature was not alone sufficient to put a period to the existence of a crowned head as well as that of a beggar; but it is likewise the duty of a historian, to show how far such reports were rashly or unjustly formed."

CHAPTER XXII.

Last illness of the Czar—His death—Grief of the Nation—Opinions of other nations with regard to Peter—Last honors paid to the Czar—His Epitaph.

PETER THE GREAT had long been suffering from a painful and incurable disease. The mineral waters which he had tried had proved of very little service, and he found himself growing sensibly weaker from the beginning of the year 1724. His labors, from which he could not be persuaded to rest, only increased his disorder and hastened his end. His sufferings became intolerable, and were now accompanied by almost constant delirium.

Whenever his reason for a time returned, he endeavored to write, though he could only scrawl a few lines which no one could read. And it was with the greatest difficulty that these words in the Russian language could be distinguished, "*Let every thing be given to—*"

He then called his daughter, the princess Anna, to his bedside, that he might dictate to her, (for Catharine could neither read nor write,) but when she came to him he had lost the power of speech, and fell into a fit which lasted sixteen hours. The Empress did not quit his bedside for three nights together. At length he breathed his last in her arms, on the 28th of January, 1725, about six o'clock in the morning.

His body was carried into the great hall of the palace, accompanied by all the imperial family, the Senate, all the principal personages of state, and an immense concourse of people. It was there exposed on a bed of state, and every one was permitted to approach and kiss his hand, till the day of his interment, which was on the 21st of March, 1725.

It has been thought, and it has been asserted in print, that he had appointed his wife Catharine to succeed him in the empire by his last will; but "the truth is," says Voltaire, "he never made a will, or at least none that ever appeared, a most astonishing negligence in so great a legislator, and a proof that he did not think his disorder mortal."

At the time of his death no one had any idea who was to be his successor. He left behind him his grandson Peter, son of the unfortunate Alexis, and

his eldest daughter, Anna, married to the Duke of Holstein.

There was a strong party in favor of young Peter; but Prince Menzikoff, who never had any other interests than those of the Empress Catharine, took care to be beforehand with all parties and their designs.

Accordingly, as the Czar drew near the moment of death, Menzikoff caused the Empress to remove into another apartment of the palace, where all their friends were assembled ready to meet her.

Here a council was held, at the breaking up of which, Catharine returned to the bedside of the Czar, who soon after breathed his last in her arms. As soon as his death was made known, the principal senators, and general officers, repaired to the palace, where the Empress made a speech to them, to which Menzikoff replied in the name of all present.

The Empress then withdrew, and the Archbishop of Pleskow addressed the assembly, telling them that on the eve of the coronation of the Empress Catharine, the deceased Czar had declared to him, that his sole reason for placing the crown upon her head, was that she might wear it after his death; upon which the assembly unanimously signed the proclamation, and Catharine succeeded her husband on the throne the very day of his death.

"Peter the Great was regretted by all those

whom he had favored," says Voltaire; "and the descendants of those who had stood out for the ancient customs, soon began to look upon him as their Father.

"Foreign nations, who have beheld the duration of his establishments, have always expressed the highest admiration for his memory; acknowledging that he was actuated by more than common prudence and wisdom, and not by a vain desire of doing extraordinary things.

"All Europe knows, that though he was fond of fame, he coveted it only for noble principles; that though he had faults, they never obscured his noble qualities; and that though as a man he was liable to errors, as a monarch he was always great.

"He every way forced nature, in his subjects, in himself, by sea and by land; but he forced her only to render her more pleasing and noble. The arts which he transplanted with his own hands into countries till then in a manner savage, have flourished and produced fruits which are lasting testimonies of his genius, and will render his memory immortal; since they now appear as natives of those places, to which he introduced them.

"The civil, political, and military government, trade, manufactures, the arts and sciences, have all been carried on according to his plan, and by an event

not to be paralleled in history, we have seen four women successively ascend the throne after him, who have maintained, in full vigor, all the great designs he accomplished, and have completed those which he had begun.

"The court," adds our historian, "has undergone some revolutions since his death, but the empire has not suffered one. Its splendor was increased by Catharine I.; it triumphed over the Turks and Swedes under Anna; and under Elizabeth it conquered Prussia and a part of Pomerania; and lastly it has tasted the sweets of peace, and has seen the arts flourish in fulness and security in the reign of Catharine II.

"Let the historians of that nation enter into the minutest circumstances of the new creation, the wars and undertakings of Peter the Great; let them rouse the emulation of their countrymen, by celebrating those heroes who assisted this monarch in his labors in the field and in the cabinet.

"It is sufficient for a stranger, a disinterested admirer of merit, to have endeavored to set to view that great man, who learned of Charles Twelfth to conquer him, who twice left his dominions in order to govern them the better, who worked with his own hands, in almost all the useful and necessary arts, to

set an example of instruction to his people, and who was the founder and the Father of his Empire."

Catharine paid the last duties to her husband's ashes, with a pomp becoming the greatest monarch that Russia, or perhaps any other country, had ever known. And though there is no court of Europe where splendor and magnificence are carried to a greater height on these occasions, than in that of Russia, yet it may with truth be said, that she even surpassed herself in the funeral honors paid to her illustrious husband.

She purchased the most precious kinds of marble, and employed some of the most eminent sculptors of Italy to erect a monument to this hero, which might, if possible, transmit the memory of his great actions to the most distant ages.

Not satisfied with this, she caused a medal to be struck, worthy of the ancients. On one side was represented the bust of the late Emperor, and these words:

"Peter the Great, Emperor and Sovereign of all Russia, born May 30th, 1672." On the reverse was the Empress sitting, with the crown on her head, the globe and sceptre by her side on a table, and before her were a sphere, sea charts, plans, mathematical instruments, arms, &c.

At distances in three different places, were re-

presented an edifice on the sea-coast, with a platform before it, a ship and galley at sea, and the late Emperor in the clouds, supported by Eternity, looking on the Empress, and showing her with his right hand all the treasures he had left her, with these words:

"Behold what I have left you!"

Several of these medals she ordered to be struck in gold, to the weight of fifty ducats, and distributed among the foreign ministers, and all the grandees of the Empire, as a testimony of her respect and gratitude to the memory of her late husband, to whose generosity she took a pleasure in owning herself indebted for her present elevated situation.

The following is given us as the Czar's epitaph:

HERE LIETH

ALL THAT COULD DIE OF A MAN IMMORTAL,

PETER ALEXOWITZ,

IT IS ALMOST SUPERFLUOUS TO ADD

Great Emperor of Russia!

A TITLE

WHICH INSTEAD OF ADDING TO HIS GLORY,
BECAME GLORIOUS BY HIS WEARING IT.
LET ANTIQUITY BE DUMB,
NOR BOAST HER ALEXANDER OR HER CÆSAR.
HOW EASY WAS VICTORY
TO LEADERS WHO WERE FOLLOWED BY HEROES!
AND WHOSE SOLDIERS FELT A NOBLE DISDAIN
AT BEING THOUGHT LESS VIGILANT THAN THEIR GENERALS!
BUT HE
WHO IN THIS PLACE FIRST KNEW REST,
FOUND SUBJECTS BASE AND INACTIVE,
UNWARLIKE, UNLEARNED, UNTRACTABLE,
NEITHER COVETOUS OF FAME, NOR FEARLESS OF DANGER,
CREATURES WITH THE NAMES OF MEN,
BUT WITH QUALITIES RATHER BRUTAL THAN RATIONAL!
YET EVEN THESE
HE POLISHED FROM THEIR NATIVE RUGGEDNESS,
AND, BREAKING OUT LIKE A NEW SUN,
TO ILLUMINATE THE MINDS OF A PEOPLE,
DISPELLED THEIR NIGHT OF HEREDITARY DARKNESS!
AND, BY FORCE OF HIS INVINCIBLE INFLUENCE,
TAUGHT THEM TO CONQUER
EVEN THE CONQUERORS OF GERMANY.
OTHER PRINCES HAVE COMMANDED VICTORIOUS ARMIES;
THIS COMMANDER CREATED THEM.
BLUSH, OH, ART! AT A A HERO WHO OWED THEE NOTHING!
EXULT, OH, NATURE! FOR THINE WAS THIS PRODIGY!

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